Commonwealth Defence Cooperation during the Cold War, 1947-1982

Eugene Kevin Foley-Friel

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts
School of Humanities, November 2018

Word count: [70,000]

Abstract

This thesis argues that the Commonwealth was a key institution which helped shape defence cooperation amongst Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK between 1947 and 1982. It suggests that the changing nature of the Commonwealth forced those countries to fundamentally review how they cooperated on defence issues. It also highlights how the Commonwealth, as a collective, reinvented the very form and function of Commonwealth defence cooperation. It advances the idea that after 1971 what develops are two strands of defence cooperation that were pursued by Commonwealth countries. One strand, which had its roots in Commonwealth defence cooperation since 1947, was focused on territorial defence against foreign states but was no longer referred to as 'Commonwealth' defence cooperation. Another strand, which was driven by new members of the Commonwealth, sought to provide military assistance to other Commonwealth countries in the pursuit of the values outlined in the Singapore Declaration of 1971. These two strands existed in parallel after 1971 and what becomes clear after the deployment of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force to Rhodesia is that the Commonwealth, as a collective, was no longer considered an appropriate vehicle for the territorial defence of its constituent countries. This thesis advances our understanding of the Commonwealth generally, but particularly in the field of the military history of the Commonwealth. It speaks to the military policies pursued by Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK during the Cold War, and why the Commonwealth initially featured quite strongly in those plans and increasingly became a burden which was shed in favour of smaller more regionally focused defence organisations in pursuit of the same objectives.

Dedication

To my parents,

Raymond & Majella

Sine qua non

Acknowledgements

This doctorate, like I suspect others before it and many after it, has been an arduous task to complete. I think it only right to acknowledge the efforts of those who taught me at the National University of Ireland in Galway, as well as the excellent tutelage I received under Professor Carl Bridge at King's College London. I was, I'd like to think, well prepared for the rigorous academic trial that every doctoral student faces. It would be remiss of me, however, not to acknowledge the helpfulness of the library and archival staff in Canberra, London, Pretoria, Ottawa, and Wellington. Their experience in navigating the archives is second to none and I sincerely doubt that it would have been possible to comb through so many diverse records in such a short time without them.

It's also important to acknowledge the role of my initial supervisor - the late professor Jeffrey Grey - for accepting my application as a doctoral student. My time at the Australian Defence Force Academy campus at the University of New South Wales in Canberra was a unique experience that I will not soon forget.

I am deeply indebted to professors John Thompson and Simon Potter who agreed to supervise the completion of this thesis following Jeff's passing. Simon's keen insight and helpful feedback helped refine many of my arguments, and this would not be what it is today without his guidance.

There were others, too, who helped over the years. Indeed my family and friends put up with more talk about Commonwealth defence cooperation than anyone could reasonably have expected to hear about in a lifetime!

For always being up for a pint, and sage advice that delayed success was still success, I'd particularly like to thank Justin Flannery.

My deepest gratitude though is reserved for my parents, Raymond & Majella, and for my siblings, Kelly, Brandon, Shannon, and Erin, who all supported me - and more than occasionally prodded me! - to see this through to the end.

What follows is all the better for their input, and I hope that they'll forgive the errors that remain in spite of their guidance.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

DATE:

Table of contents:

Introduction

Argument

This thesis argues that Commonwealth military cooperation persisted between 1947 and 1982 but was fundamentally changed by a variety of fiscal, political, and military pressures on Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK. These pressures existed as a result of a combination of internal and external political developments inside those key Commonwealth countries and within the Commonwealth collectively throughout the period. This thesis argues that these pressures transformed how the Commonwealth cooperated on defence issues. Central to the argument presented in this thesis is that Commonwealth defence cooperation between 1947 and 1971 was focused on the territorial defence of the Commonwealth. Although this form of cooperation continued after 1971 amongst certain members of the Commonwealth, it was no longer known as 'Commonwealth' defence cooperation. Instead what developed after 1971 was an inward-orientated form of defence cooperation that did not advocate or engage in the type of external defence that had previously characterised Commonwealth defence cooperation. Key events leading up to 1971, culminating in the Singapore Declaration, prompted a change in what was considered to be the goal of defence cooperation amongst key Commonwealth countries. After 1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation focused on a new form of defence cooperation which was not focused on external threats, but instead sought to support key internal values. Central to the overall argument is addressing the point that the Commonwealth remained a key relevant interest for a variety of Commonwealth states on the issue of defence cooperation throughout the Cold War period.

The overall argument will be advanced by providing clear evidence of joint Commonwealth military endeavours between 1947 and 1971, including the Middle East Defence Conference, the deployment of the 1st Commonwealth Division, and maintenance of the 26th Commonwealth Brigade in its various forms. The ramifications of technological and political changes throughout the period, some of which had a profound effect on the military landscape with serious implications for defence cooperation between far-flung countries will also be considered. Part of addressing defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth between 1971 and 1982 will include highlighting the Commonwealth military support provided to Rhodesia in 1981 as well as highlighting some of the broader implications for political decisions made in the Commonwealth between 1971 and 1982. This will point to how the

style and purpose of defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth changed over the years, yet continued to remain relevant to key Commonwealth countries. Fundamentally the crucial questions answered here are how, and why, key countries in the Commonwealth viewed and used the Commonwealth as a body of countries with which they could cooperate on defence matters between 1947 and 1982. Ultimately it will become clear that the changes in the Commonwealth fundamentally altered the purpose of military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. It will also become clear that the pre-1971 style of defence cooperation was preserved as key states in the Commonwealth took account of these changes in the Commonwealth and persisted with their own endeavours along the lines of the pre-1971 style of defence cooperation.

The changes in defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth between 1947 and 1971 were not the culmination of a steady decline from a height of Commonwealth cooperation in the post-Second World War period to an intermittent and lacklustre approach to Commonwealth defence relations by 1971. There was rather a turbulent development process of transformation that was punctuated by instances of progression and advancement as to how Commonwealth defence relations might fit into the new political and strategic framework[1] that dominated international affairs during this period.[2] These developments, particularly the political difficulties in the Middle East and the British economic situation, foreshadowed the decline and departure of the UK from its role as the core of Commonwealth military cooperation. This was not a development that was entirely foreseen by contemporaries. Indeed, such was the strength of the effort that successive British governments had expended in maintaining its role between 1947 and 1971 that there was a certain level of surprise expressed in Australian and New Zealand political circles when the UK reduced its involvement outside of Europe by 1971.[3]

[1] It should be noted that these internal difficulties in Commonwealth defence cooperation were not hidden, and successive American administrations at least seemed generally aware of the difficulties the UK faced. It was, for instance, a belief held by the American government in 1963 that the British would not remain in South-East Asia for 'much longer'. - Letter from McNamara (US) to Ministry of Defence FS/63/106 8 November 1963 DEFE 7/2389 UKNA

[2] Even in the immediate post-war period there were some concerns that the Commonwealth, in its current state (i.e. before the accession of India and Pakistan) was ill-suited to the new era and diverged on some major policy issues relating to the Soviet Union. - C.W.P. Waters 'Anglo-Australian Conflict over the Cold War: HV Evatt as President of the UN General Assembly 1948-49' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 (1994) p 311

[3] Indeed the Australian government was split in its assessment of British indications of their decision to withdraw from East of Aden. There were competing views as to whether this was a bluff or hyperbolic request, and the action which should accordingly be taken, and a dissenting view which saw their withdrawal as an inevitability and encouraged what effectively amounted to an early adoption of what would become the Defence of Australian policy. - D. McDougall 'Australia and the British Military Withdrawal East of Suez' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 52 (1997) p 188. The American reaction was rather stronger, resulting in an exasperated Dean Rusk, the US' Secretary of State, to demand that the British should 'act like Britain'. Cabinet Conclusions Part 1 12 January 1968 CAB 128/43 UKNA

Officially designated Commonwealth defence cooperation re-emerged ten years later in 1981 with the creation of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force Rhodesia. This new form of Commonwealth military cooperation differed significantly from previous Commonwealth cooperation between 1947 and 1971. Commonwealth defence cooperation was no longer focused on the territorial integrity of the member states of the Commonwealth. Instead it had developed into an internal force focused on its own values to help ensure the transition of an old imperial territory into a new democratic member state. Furthermore, such was the development of the Commonwealth that no country could be assured of Commonwealth assistance in the face of armed aggression. In fact, it could very likely be assured of at least some Commonwealth opinion to the contrary.[4] The defence of the constituent countries of the Commonwealth had devolved to bilateral defence arrangements, often with non-binding terms. Those agreements usually included an acknowledgement or understanding that their defence could only be guaranteed through regional support structures.[5]

Nonetheless, the original concept of Commonwealth defence cooperation, as it was understood in 1971 and earlier, persisted.[6] Although it was no longer designated as a Commonwealth activity, and had been seriously curtailed in its capabilities, aims and the number of countries involved, its fundamental form and goals had hardly changed from the heady days of the 1st Commonwealth Division. The transformation of the Commonwealth, coupled with other pressures on key Commonwealth countries, particularly on Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, put a huge amount of strain on the prospect of a continuation of 'Commonwealth' defence cooperation. In places this strain led to its outright collapse. In Canada defence concerns had shifted from Commonwealth cooperation to the defence of the Arctic circle in line with NATO and the

---

4 This was most clearly demonstrated in the Commonwealth reaction to the Falklands War of 1982 which saw limited military support from the Commonwealth for the UK, and even political support was far from certain. Some economic sanctions were offered by some of those countries which were still participating in pre-1971 forms of defence cooperation with the UK, such as Australia and New Zealand. - G. K. Daniel, *The Falklands War: Britain versus the Past in the South Atlantic* (London: MacFarland & company, 1998) pp. 92-93

5 It had been recognised, by 1961, that the UK alone could not even be assured to offer the defence of Malaysia, Singapore, or anywhere in South-East Asia without the active engagement of supporting friendly forces. - Telegram to Ministry of Defence from Commander-in-Chief (Far East) 12th December 1963 DO 169/269 UKNA

6 Indeed it had developed to include greater consideration for counter-insurgency activities in addition to the traditional view on territorial defence, and the few new participants in such Commonwealth activities were directed towards planning and preparing for such operations. Furthermore, where a more recognisable effort existed, such as in the Five Powers Defence Agreement, it now lacked the clear and concrete commitment to defence both in practice and in theory that had driven Commonwealth defence cooperation for so long. So although it did survive the transition, it did not do so unscathed.

US strategy. As well as the preservation of their own defence,[7] there was a growing interest in the potential of being a regular contributor to UN peace-keeping initiatives.[8] South Africa's attention changed between its internal security[9] to its borders and adjacent waters and back again during this period. As a result South Africa had little involvement generally with Commonwealth military affairs, even prior to South Africa's effective ejection from the Commonwealth in 1961.[10] Australia and New Zealand too became very regionally focused and paid particular attention to their 'Near North'. Although the attention of the UK had turned towards the defence of its home islands and Europe,[11] lingering involvement and interest in South-East Asia – coupled with interest from Australia and New Zealand, as well as Malaysia and Singapore – formed a *de facto* continuation of the original expression of Commonwealth strategic planning after 1971. It was a shadow of past endeavours, but the underlying concepts remained recognisable as being based on previously established Commonwealth goals.

This all speaks to the heart of the issues involved here. Fundamentally this is a story of change, progress, and persistence of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The Commonwealth starts shortly after 1947 with a clear global strategic defence policy that manifested in a global plan amongst the Commonwealth to defend the Middle East against the Soviet Union.[12] This was challenged by developments, both political and technological, during the period that prompted change. The response

[7] At the end of the Second World War this was considered to be in Europe and Asia. This would have significant ramifications a few years later when discussions for pan-Commonwealth coordination began on the premise that the Middle East was the fulcrum around which the defence of the Commonwealth would pivot. -Memorandum on Canadian Defence Relations with the British Commonwealth 22 November 1944 RG 25 Volume 5724 LAC

[8] They were, in fact, particularly sensitive to any commentary – either from the British government or private citizens – regarding what they considered to be "Imperial' aspects of defence policy'. The Canadian High Commissioner to the UK pressed the point to such an extent that he ventured to say that the same considerations applied to Anglo-American defence arrangements (i.e. that the 'best hope of maintaining [them]... lay in their [the UK] saying nothing whatever about them') should be applied to Anglo-Canadian defence arrangements. - Telegram no. 2206 From the High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 13 November 1946 RG 25 Volume 5963 File 50227-50 Part I LAC

[9] This inward direction in terms of defence policy is very important with respect to Commonwealth defence thinking of the time. The idea that the internal security of an independent country was the sole remit of that country was repeatedly stressed by the Commonwealth until its expansion fostered the creation of a very different thought process. This commitment that the internal security of a country was reserved to that country was reaffirmed during the discussions on regional defence and particularly with respect to South Africa. - 'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the UK June 1955' Simonstad, and Cmnd. 9520 Memorandum on the need for International Discussions with regard to Regional Defence 30 June 1955 MV 190 SANDFA.

[10] An exception should be noted with respect to their brief engagement with the Middle East Defence Conference of 1951, although even this was a minor contribution in comparison to Australia and New Zealand. - Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers from 21 to 26 June 1951 'Defence Policy and Global Strategy: The Middle East 31 July 1951 A5954 box 1799 LAC

[11] Memorandum by the Prime Minister 'Our Foreign and Defence Policy for the Future' 29 September 1961 CAB 134/1929 UKNA

to those changes by the Commonwealth, and especially by Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK are identified here. Armed with a knowledge of those issues an explanation is offered as to how these changes affected defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. This is a two-fold explanation, one that points to the advent of a distinct replacement for Commonwealth defence cooperation that starts in 1981, and also the continuation of the pre-1971 form of defence cooperation amongst key Commonwealth countries.

Historiography

How the British Empire and the Commonwealth reacted and adapted to changes has been the subject of considerable study by historians over the years.[13] The historiography of the development of military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth during World War One, and World War Two, has received significant treatment. Yet how the Commonwealth reacted to, and prompted changes in, military cooperation amongst key Commonwealth members after 1945 is seriously underdeveloped. Although an understandable consequence of the focus on new states arising through the decolonisation process coupled with a sensitivity to the shift in power from the UK to the US in the post-war period, it has nevertheless caused a gap in the literature. An extensive body of material on bilateral relations, especially between certain members of the Commonwealth and the UK and the US over the course of the Cold War, has been met by similarly well-developed historiography on what might be called "area studies". These are studies which focus on specific regions. South-East Asia, in particular, has seen extensive and detailed treatment. The cumulative result of this detailed specific research has been a deterioration in consideration of some of the broader issues. Policy-makers in the UK and in the Commonwealth used individual regional focuses to help identify their specific contributions in the context of broader operations, especially in defence and foreign policy issues during the Cold War. Planned force deployments to South-East Asia were conducted on the basis of what would be left available for other areas where British forces were needed. Similarly no foreign policy analysis could

[12] Although they would very shortly thereafter be undermined. Indeed, as early as 1949 Canada was advocated for defensive arrangements to have a 'regional basis'. - Defence appreciation as a basis for military planning between Commonwealth Staffs – COS(49)49 9 February 1949 RG 25 Volume 222 File 1400/23 LAC

[13] Perhaps of particular use and interest for an overview of imperial history is W.M. Louis & R. Winks, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). However, see the bibliography for a wider list of studies on the British Empire and Commonwealth and pages 5 – 12 for a more detailed treatment of the historiography over the years. It is also worth noting some of the key projects in the publication of documents surrounding various countries in the British Empire and Commonwealth, these include the A, B, and C series of the British Documents on the End of Empire Project, the Documents on Australian Foreign Policy project, and the Documents on Canadian External Relations project.

have been conducted without acknowledgement of the likely reaction of the US. Analysing defence or foreign policy issues without that broader context, while often necessary for very practical reasons, gives rise to the possibility that key elements needed to explain the issues involved may be missed. This study focuses on that broader picture, attempting to string together more detailed area and subject specific analysis into a coherent whole.

Other studies along similar lines have been conducted before. In the late 1940s with the dawn of an expanding Commonwealth Nicholas Mansergh wrote extensively, and optimistically, on the Commonwealth.[14] This built on an equally favourable reading of the post-1918 Commonwealth by Sir Keith Hancock.[15] Mansergh's focus on the Commonwealth as an institution and the activities of the new states that came into being during the post-war period has helped shape contemporary historiography. The attention given to these new countries and the transformation of the Commonwealth into an international collective of moral authority suited both the prevailing political and cultural climate at the time of Mansergh's writing.

After Mansergh the historiography of the Commonwealth shifted as the reality of the changes to the Commonwealth were made plain. Uncertainty regarding the future of the Commonwealth became reflected in a growing uncertainty of the value of the Commonwealth. Bruce Miller's work in re-evaluating the Commonwealth throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s expressed a degree of reservation about the Commonwealth that was not to be found in the more optimistic tones of Mansergh a decade earlier.[16] Miller's reservations were reinforced in 1971 when Margaret Ball heralded the Commonwealth as an international tool for consultation amongst a variety of countries.[17] By the late 1970s Bruce Miller and David McIntyre were moved to provide increasingly reserved opinions on the development of the Commonwealth.[18] The optimism of earlier years had long since faded.The

[14] For a full bibliography of the works of N. Mansergh see 'A Bibliography of the works of Nicholas Mansergh', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 8 (1979)* pp 187-190

[15] W.K. Hancock *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, 1918-36 – Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937) & *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs, 1918-39 – Part 2,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942)

[16] See, for example, J.D.B. Miller *Survey of Commonwealth Affairs: Problems of Expansion and Attrition 1953-69* (London: Oxford University Press 1974) and also his *The Commonwealth in the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)

[17] M. Ball *The 'Open' Commonwealth* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1971)

[18] McIntyre has written extensively on the evolution of the Commonwealth, including on some of its military aspects. Of particular note in 1973 his *The Commonwealth: Its Past, Present, and Future* (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1973) and *The Commonwealth of Nations: Origins and impact, 1869-1971* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

importance of the Commonwealth was now thought to have been in establishing non-political relationships amongst its members, as both Margaret Ball and Bruce Miller had first pointed out. This view of the Commonwealth as a mere functional tool for cooperation of debatable value increasingly held sway with Denis Judd and Peter Slinn both concurring that the role and function of the Commonwealth was largely as a forum for cooperation.[19]

By the mid-1980s a certain disappointment and criticism began to pervade the literature. Paul Taylor remarked critically on the burden that the Commonwealth represented to the UK,[20] and Dennis Austin pointed to the sole definitive achievement of the organisation was that it, in the main, had ensured a certain amiability of relations.[21] The direction of the historiography had been well and truly set by the 1990s with Margaret Doxey's study on the Commonwealth Secretariat continuing to emphasise the practical rather than political benefits of Commonwealth membership.[22] David McIntyre further highlighted the significance of these practical connections amongst the Commonwealth and a growing sense developed that the political value of the Commonwealth had been overestimated by the UK and the Commonwealth had been received overly favourably during its initial expansion.[23]

Although military cooperation amongst the Empire and Commonwealth before 1945 has been explored in some detail, there has been much less effort devoted to exploring military cooperation amongst the members of the Commonwealth after 1945. There is a particular dearth of research on how the UK's senior service, the Royal Navy, was affected by drastic changes to the political landscape and the scope of its operations. The history of the Royal Navy has remained focused on what is essentially an operational history of the Navy, and much of the historical analysis on it during the Cold War has focused on the inter-service struggles prompted by cost-cutting measures in the UK. Some work, typically in the context of those inter-service struggles particularly between the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, has addressed the development of the submarine-launched nuclear missile, and the broader question of how the British nuclear deterrent would be deployed. Analysis of other branches of the UK armed forces, and the armed forces of other Commonwealth countries, suffers from similar

[19] D. Judd & P. Slinn, *The Evolution of the Modern Commonwealth 1902-80* (London: Macmillan, 1982)
[20] P. Taylor 'Prospects for the Commonwealth in the 1980s' in P. Taylor & A.J.R. Groom (eds) *The Commonwealth in the 1980s: Challenges and Opportunities* (London: Macmillan, 1984)
[21] D. Austin *The Commonwealth and Britain* (London: Chatham House 1988)
[22] M. Doxey *The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Contemporary Commonwealth* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1989)
[23] For a general overview of the progression of the historiography from 1950 to 1997 see D. McIntyre 'The Commonwealth' in W.M. Louis & R. Winks, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also the bibliography for a wider list of works.

issues. Philip Darby's work on British defence policy east of the Suez remains a cornerstone of the consideration given to the political implications of national defence policy on the Dominions and the rest of the world.[24] A more recent work by Malcolm Murfett has explored the pattern of naval retreat from imperial obligations after the Second World War.[25] Even this, however, builds only upon the groundswell of study that has been done on South-East Asia and the Far East more generally. David McIntyre, David Stevens, Hector Donohue, Karl Hack and Nicholas Tarling are some of those who have driven the exploration of the political and military implications for the UK and Imperial-Dominion relations prompted by imperial retreat, technological change, and the expansion of the Commonwealth in South-East Asia. Other areas have not received the same level of attention, partly on account of archives remaining closed but also due to the cost and time involved in reaching those archives. Peter Henshaw's article on the transfer of Simonstown highlights one of the avenues of research still largely uncharted.[26] John Singleton's work on military procurement by New Zealand between 1950 and 1970 exposes an area of research that is clearly well documented in the archives, but remains entirely underappreciated.[27] Questions still remain on, for example, the suddenness of the British departure from the Gulf States so shortly after the establishment of a Persian Gulf Joint Task Force. These lines of enquiry could inform our understanding of how Imperial and Commonwealth connections in political and military circles ended, or quite possibly were extended, in the light of the withdrawal of the UK from its position as the key arms supplier to the Dominions.

More recent work has concentrated on the involvement of specific countries within the Commonwealth. There has been a growing trend to nationalise the historiography of military cooperation, especially amongst the British Commonwealth after 1945. Jeffrey Grey's doctoral thesis on the Commonwealth armies during the Korean war in the late 1980s focused on the interaction and points of conflict and cooperation in a joint military structure in the Commonwealth.[28] Even here, however, there was a misplaced, if perhaps understandable, focus on Australian relations. P.J. Dennis is similarly specialised in an Australian outlook on the military involvement of Australia in Commonwealth activities after the Second World War. Ashley Jackson has written extensively on

[24] P. Darby *British Defence Policy East of Suez* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973)
[25] M. Murfett *In Jeopardy: The Royal Navy and British Far Eastern Defence Policy, 1945-51* (London: Oxford University Press, 1995)
[26] P. J. Henshaw 'The Transfer of Simonstown: Afrikaner Nationalism, South African Strategic Dependence, and British Global Power' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (1992)
[27] J. Singleton 'Vampires to Skyhawks: Military Aircraft and Frigate purchases by New Zealand 1950-70' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2002)
[28] J. Grey *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

imperial warfare. Jackson's book *Distant Drums* on the role played by the colonies during the First and Second World Wars highlights the broader nature of military cooperation between the UK and the rest of the Empire and Commonwealth.[29] Unfortunately it stops short of providing that same critical analysis to the period after the Second World War. His *The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction* recognises this gap by pointing out that Britain's withdrawal from the East of the Suez in the late 1960s and early 1970s has not been met by a corresponding decline in military involvement in the region, going so far as to claim that 'Britain has deployed more firepower in the region in the last twenty years than it did even during the heyday of empire.'[30] These are the sort of questions which should be addressed to establish a more complete understanding of the military history of the period.

The study of Anglo-Dominion relations more broadly has received mixed treatment from historians over the years. Significant work has been done on Anglo-Dominion relations before and during the First and Second World Wars. This has dovetailed neatly with studies on migration and identity in the British world more generally. Kent Federowich's recent work on Anglo-Canadian relations during the first half of the twentieth century, and particularly on joint Anglo-Dominion migrations schemes, has highlighted how the Dominions exercised fundamental concepts of nation-building and identity in a way that acknowledged the imperial connection. These bonds were cornerstones of what, as Federowich put it, 'dominion-hood meant in practice'.[31] This thesis suggests that these connections did not simply disappear or were put to one side as the Commonwealth grew, but instead persisted despite change. This level of detailed analysis on Anglo-Dominion relations has not been extended to the area of military history. Much military history has, for reasons perhaps specific to its subject matter, a very national focus. Andrea Benvenuti's recent work on Australian policy towards Britain's end of empire in South-East Asia exemplifies the current nationally-focused trend in the historiography.[32] While it takes steps to contextualise such arrangements, by exploring Australian foreign and defense policies in relation to Malaysia and Singapore during the Cold War it stops short of a broader analysis that is needed to frame the explanation of why cooperation amongst the Commonwealth changed so dramatically.

---

[29] A. Jackson *Distant drums: The role of Colonies in British Imperial Warfare* (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press, 2010)

[30] A Jackson *The British Empire: A very short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

[31] K. Federowich 'Restocking the British world: Empire Migration and Anglo-Canadian Relations, 1919-30' *Britain and the World* 9 (2016)

[32] A Benvenuti *Cold War and Decolonisation: Australia's Policy towards Britain's End of Empire in South-East Asia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2017)

In order to understand that framework it is useful to consider the broader historiography of military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth, including the concept of 'Imperial defence'. Imperial defence is a strategy of sorts in which one constituent element of the Empire would be defended by contributions from another, a strategy which allowed Australian and New Zealand ground forces to fight in the Middle East while the UK's Royal Navy defended Australia and New Zealand. The term entered into parlance during the final decades of the late nineteenth century when it was applied to the system of defence for the British Isles, the overseas territory held by the Empire, and – perhaps most importantly – the strategic links required to maintain access between all of those points. Wilkinson and Dilke's analysis of these issues highlighted, even as early as 1892, the paramount importance of those links, and the absolute requirement of the primacy of the navy.[33] An age-old concern with Imperial defence, and one that existed right the way through to the Korean war and beyond. The historiography on this particular problem is perhaps more developed with respect to Canadian operations, particularly by D.C. Gordon and Richard Preston, who illustrated the problems of addressing local concerns regarding security, specifically of Canada, to the broader scheme of Imperial defence.[34] Jeffrey Grey's work also speaks to the political headaches such deployments caused especially with regards to Australia.[35]

One very interesting study that speaks to some of the issues on Imperial Defence is The Cambridge History of the British Empire, written between 1930 and 1960. It was reflective of its time and concentrated on the military history of the UK as a leading world power. The intricate nature of the relations between the UK and the Dominions and the Empire was a secondary concern. The Oxford History of the British Empire presented a more considered picture of those issues. The second half of its excellent volume on the twentieth century is dominated by area studies. Anthony Clayton's chapter on Imperial Defence addresses the issue directly, but only for the first half of the twentieth century.[36] It is indicative of the prevailing attitude to the study of Commonwealth military history that the 1st Commonwealth Division in Korea is relegated to half a sentence and the discussion on Dominion interest 'outside of their own geographic regions' is just as quickly dismissed. Where the Cambridge

[33] C. W. Dilke & S. Wilkinson *Imperial Defence* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

[34] See C. Gordon *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defence, 1870-1914* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965) & R. A. Preston *Canada and Imperial Defence: A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth's Defence Organisation, 1867-1919* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967)

[35] See, in particular, J. Grey *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), and also J. Grey *A Military History of Australia* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[36] see A. Clayton ' "Deceptive Might": Imperial Defence and Security, 1900 – 68' in W.M. Louis & R. Winks, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

History of the British Empire was, perhaps, too focused on the UK, the Oxford History appears to have swung the other way.

It is worth reiterating that the essential point of Imperial Defence was the preservation of the British Isles, the Empire, and the points in between. The nature of warfare changed dramatically during the twentieth century, especially with the advent of nuclear weapons. Anthony Clayton is right to afford such focus on cooperation between the US and the UK in terms of nuclear weapons technology and strike plans, but misses the implications that the development of these new weapons had for Imperial Defence more broadly. The retreat to their own geographical regions was not out of disinterest in wider defence plans, but at least in part a practical recognition that to defend against such new threats more localised forces would be required. This can be clearly seen – and is demonstrated later in this thesis – where plans in the early 1950s to defend the Middle East with troops from Australia and New Zealand were simply untenable. The conflict would be long finished by the time they eventually arrived.

It is important to recognise that Imperial Defence was a flexible concept. In part this is driven by the fact that its natural corollary, some kind of Imperial Foreign Policy, did not exist. The notion of an Imperial foreign policy had been effectively discarded after the First World War. D.C Watt noted, as early as 1963, that this presented fundamental problems to the viability of a joint Imperial defence.[37] This was reflected in the increased difficulty in deploying forces from the Empire, particularly from India, to positions around the world. John Darwin argues that this prompted the UK to give greater priority to local collaborators who could help maintain the Empire during the inter-war years and that after the Second World War this global system of Imperial defence was steadily eroded. He suggests that this decline was only reluctantly accepted in London where Whitehall and Westminster did not equate the independence of constituent elements of the Empire with an end of the economic, political, and strategic links between those territories and the UK.[38] John Kent points to the greater focus applied to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East after the Second World War by the UK,[39] while Wm. Roger Louis highlights the role of the British Empire in the Middle East. Different analyses all underscore the fundamental problem that the lack of a comparable foreign policy to the concept of

[37] D. C. Watt *Imperial Defence Policy and Imperial Foreign Policy, 1911-39* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1962)

[38] J. Darwin *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London: Penguin books, 2012) & also his *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

[39] J. Kent 'Informal Empire and the Defence of the Middle East 1945-56' in R. Bridges (ed.) *Imperialism and Decolonisation in Africa* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999)

Imperial defence complicates any analysis of combined Commonwealth and UK military activity, especially in a context where such cooperation has to change rapidly in response to new political and technological developments.

On a more practical note one pivotal development in the historiography that needs to be mentioned is the change in the rules regarding access to official records in the UK. The Wilson's government change to a thirty year rule from the old fifty year rule provoked a flurry of publications on Imperial defence issues. Starting in the early 1980s a plethora of documents have been released on the fall of Singapore during the Second World War, and the implications this had on the region. The 'official history' by S.W. Kirby on the event in the 1970s[40] was complemented by further study a decade later by Haggie, McIntyre, and Neidpath. Their efforts have framed the analysis of the period, and when coupled with a reappraisal of the Allied effort during the Second World War by Wm. Roger Louis, amongst others, has set a framework which has downplayed and underestimated the value and effectiveness of the Commonwealth even as its military role continued after the Second World War. This has generated a narrative of continued decline of British influence and involvement in South-East Asia, spurred on by a fascination with the end of the Empire.

This thesis helps illuminate the depth and continued military cooperation amongst key members of the Commonwealth during the Cold War period. It takes a broad overview chronologically across a number of countries on a very specific theme. It does so with the intention of providing key insights into how, and why, Commonwealth military cooperation continued. This feeds into broader questions regarding the British empire, the Commonwealth, and especially how the decline was managed and the effects it had on the UK and the pre-1945 members of the Commonwealth. There is a key question to be answered here: was the Commonwealth largely an irrelevance in the decline in military cooperation amongst the Dominions and the UK or was it, as is argued here, fundamental to key defence considerations by existing members of the Commonwealth?

Conceptual issues and nomenclature

The concept of Commonwealth defence cooperation for the purposes of this thesis encompasses a wide range of activities in which Commonwealth countries conduct joint military operations and

[40] S. W. Kirby *Singapore: The Chain of Disaster* (London: Macmillan, 1971)

operate joint formations with an aim to secure the defence of the Commonwealth in part or as a whole.[41] This is similar to the notion of Imperial Defence. The idea that the defence of the British Empire and the constituent members of the British Commonwealth would be achieved through the joint action of Commonwealth forces had emerged in the years preceding the First World War, and this persisted through the First and Second World Wars, and was the basis for defence planning in the 1950s. The defence of countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and even the UK was predicated upon effective military cooperation in Europe, the Middle East, and South-East Asia. This approach emphasised the necessity to provide for the defence of themselves, and their allies, through active engagement in overseas theatres: Australian and New Zealand contingents fighting in the Middle East, Canadians in Europe, and the British around the globe.

One of the complicating factors in exploring the underlying concept of Commonwealth defence is that the meaning of the word 'Commonwealth' became divorced from its membership as the Commonwealth expanded. There is a question that must be asked when only a certain subset of the membership of the Commonwealth is engaged in a particular task if such activity warrants the label of 'Commonwealth'. This is a particularly pertinent question for joint military forces deployment consisting of some, but not all, Commonwealth members. The presence of some, or even a minority, of Commonwealth interests in the early post-war period was seemingly more than sufficient to justify the application of the title by those involved. The British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan at the close of the war was a joint force commanded by an Australian officer with troops and materiel drawn from Australia, India, the UK, and New Zealand.[42] The absence of Canadian, South African, or other Commonwealth countries gave rise to no complaints, concerns, or discussions related to the application of the name Commonwealth to that military formation. Similarly the 1st Commonwealth Division which served in Korea stuck with the Commonwealth title despite the absence of personnel from South

[41] This interpretation is based on the intended approach of the UK, and by extension its Commonwealth, to pursue a war effort in the event of war after 1945. In order to 'allow the Commonwealth countries to fight successfully in the event of war' the British government stated that the Commonwealth would need to 'prepare common strategic objections and coordinated plans' and 'maintain cooperation between all members of the Commonwealth in all aspects of defence'. - Memorandum by the Chiefs of Staff 'Commonwealth Defence Cooperation' Appendix to Memorandum by the UK Government 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspects' 23 September 1949 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 PMM(49)1 LAC

[42] Approximately 33% were Australian, 30% Indian, 20% British, and 17% were from New Zealand. This was all under a single Australian commander. For a more detailed treatment of the breakdown of the occupation force see J. Wood. *The Forgotten Force: Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan 1945-52* (St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1998). Also interesting to note in this context is that India was not a Commonwealth country at the time.

Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon, and only a token contribution from India. There are many other examples of this throughout the period, including the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve. The Reserve consisted solely of British, Australian, and New Zealand military personnel and served a Commonwealth purpose in only a very specific extent as it applied in South-East Asia.[43] Furthermore the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, similarly comprised of British, Australian, and New Zealand forces only, continued to use the title of 'Commonwealth' until 1971.

Indeed, it is not until the deployment of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force in 1981 that there could be said to be a concrete political basis for the prefix 'Commonwealth' to be assigned to any military formation in the post-war period. Although the Monitoring Force drew from a selection of countries, and certainly not the entirety of the Commonwealth, it had the complete assent of the Commonwealth for its formation and deployment.[44] The explicit recognition of those forces as Commonwealth, even when not constituted entirely out of all Commonwealth countries, was a different approach that had its roots in the Singapore Declaration of 1971. The Declaration was reflective of an increasing formalisation of actions taken by the Commonwealth, on certain limited matters, and also triggered the end of a hitherto more liberal application of the term. The Declaration led to the re-designation of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade to the 28th ANZUK brigade that same year. What is curious about this re-designation is that neither the role nor intent of the 28th Brigade changed after 1971. Its force structure and deployment remained similarly unchanged. It, in fact, differed in no material way except in name only. The change was made purely on political grounds, and was designed to reflect the changes that had occurred in the Commonwealth since the formation's inception. Those changes were the culmination of a rapid expansion of the Commonwealth's membership during the 1960s, an expansion which would affect Commonwealth military cooperation.

Perspective & other restrictions

The research for this thesis was a daunting task. It was based on a wide variety of source material including multi-archival research, various political and legal texts, as well as engaging with the historiography of several countries. It is inevitable that some specific elements will have received more attention than others. This was a necessary compromise to the practicalities involved. Nationally-

[43] Letter from McBride to Menzies 6 October 1954 A5952/23 Item 1428/44 NAA

[44] Report of the Sub-Committee as Adopted by the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa, 14 December 1979 Commonwealth Secretariat C151/4/5. See also Chan S. & Mudhai O. 'Commonwealth Residualism and the Machinations of power in a turbulent Zimbabwe' *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 39 (2001), p 61

focused historiography, which has dominated contemporary historical research,[45] suffers far less from these issues but can sometimes miss the implications of certain decisions and events for other countries.[46] Although there is something to be said with regards to a 'bottom-up' approach to an analysis of British imperial policy and how it affected Commonwealth cooperative activities,[47] it would be impossible to adequately cover the multitude of events and consequences on each of the main countries under consideration over the time period without some narrowing of focus. A common approach in this regard is to separate the periphery and the metropole, attempting to understand the actions of one in the context of the other.[48]

This thesis takes a broader perspective which focuses on the continuation, decline, and transformation of military cooperation amongst key Commonwealth countries. This has been carefully approached to avoid creating the illusion of a multi-state perspective where all such countries are of one mind and united in their goals in Commonwealth defence cooperation. This is to avoid creating an implication of a level of concerted action amongst the countries involved which simply did not exist.[49] It has also sought to avoid excessive attribution of the political direction of any particular country to a few select individuals by focusing on states as collective actors, acknowledging the flaws in that assumption but accepting them as a means of providing further insight into the broader story.

Further difficulties become clear when looking at the specifics of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth organisation after 1947 was radically different to the Commonwealth that fought in the

---

45 The prevailing view of imperial history being subordinated to national historiography has been held at least as early as the 1980s and much effort has been expended since then in subsuming what were once imperial views and history which, by definition, involved huge swathes of the world into parochial focuses of limited extent and confined analysis. - D. Fieldhouse, 'Can humpy-dumpty be put together again? Imperial History in the 1980s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) p 17

46 Different models have been advocated for the analysis of imperial history at various points since the end of the 1980s, and almost all have been defined with the express intention of explaining the imperial process through the prism of the subject national viewpoint. Even in analysis for the spread of empire, both formal and informal, have taken on a hue of an analysis which did not exist at the time and arguably had no basis for existence in the period being studied. Such perspectives while flawed are both popular and comparatively easily undertaken given the ease of access and limited definition of source materials required for analysis. - R. Robinson, 'Imperial Theory and the Question of Imperialism after Empire' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) p 17

47 B.R., Tomlinson, 'The Contraction of England: National Decline and Loss of Empire' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 11 (1982) p 69

48 D., Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23 (1997) p 358

49 See A.G. Hopkins, 'Viewpoint - Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History' *Past and Present* 164 (1999) p 198 and also note that the lack of substance to the Commonwealth had been oft-commented upon, with much international admiration expressed for the Commonwealth's 'admirable and efficient ad-hoc-ery'. D. McIntyre, 'The Admission of Small States to the Commonwealth' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24 (1996) p 245

two World Wars. The inclusion of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon introduced a range of issues to the organisation. Indeed, between 1947 and 1971 the difficulties of using the Commonwealth as a central perspective from which to view Commonwealth relations grows exponentially. The rapid influx of new member states and the reorientation of 'Commonwealth' interests to other matters, particularly the issue of racism,[50] creates too much instability and change to form a reliable or useful perspective for the purposes of Commonwealth military cooperation. From 1971 onwards the Commonwealth had changed utterly and its role, focus, and intent differed so drastically from the 1947 Commonwealth that offering any kind of perspective on developments during that period presents significant difficulties.

Instead, this thesis pursues its argument by focusing on Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK. Those five countries were key to military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth prior to the accession of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. How they responded to a changing global context with respect to the degree, role, and purpose of military cooperation is considered critical to understanding why Commonwealth military cooperation changed so fundamentally.

While the pre-1947 Commonwealth included the Irish Free State and the Dominion of Newfoundland, the reasons for not focusing on them in this study should be obvious, and it is suggested that their absence is relatively minor and of limited consequence. The Irish Free State had largely detached itself from Commonwealth affairs after 1932 following the election of Fianna Fáil and the dismantling of many of the terms of the 1922 treaty provisions.[51] Although the British abdication crisis allowed for a more formalized distancing of relations it was not until the declaration of a republic in 1949 by Fine Gael that the Free State left the Commonwealth.[52] The Dominion of Newfoundland also 'left' the Commonwealth in 1949, albeit in a rather different way, with its incorporation into

[50] The issue of race relations was in part an issue created by the British themselves arising from their colonial practices. Extensive economic growth in the colonies had been known to lead to divisions based on racial and ethnic ties. One such example can be seen in modern Southern Sudan where the exploitative practices of immigrant northern traders in modern Northern Sudan was a view held both with substance and shared by both British colonial administrators in the region and the southern Sudanese themselves. Such economic inequality and problems evolving along racial lines would set the scene for the growth of such tensions over the coming decades. - J. Tosh, 'The Economy of Southern Sudan under the British 1898-1955' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 9 (1981) p. 283

[51] D. Keogh & M. McCarthy *The Making of the Irish Constitution 1937* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2007)

[52] D.W., Dean, 'Final exit? Britain, Eire, the Commonwealth and the Repeal of the External Relations Act 1945-49' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 20 (1992) p 411

Canada following a plebiscite.[53]

The nature of the development of the Commonwealth is such that it offers a significant range of potential start and end dates for any analysis. There is certainly an argument for analysis of the post-war Commonwealth to begin from 1949 onwards, and it is quite tempting to start from the London Declaration of 28 April. This would dovetail nicely with the end of conscription in the UK, the independence of Ireland, and the incorporation of Newfoundland into Canada. Instead the independence and partition of India in 1947 is offered as a more useful demarcation of the Commonwealth timeline. The ramifications that the expansion of the Commonwealth had on all facets of Commonwealth activity was profound, especially for Commonwealth defence cooperation. Racial issues adversely affected Commonwealth defence relations, complicating trade and cooperation with South Africa in particular. Similarly the religious tensions between India and Pakistan resulting from its partition[54] demonstrated the difficulties that the decolonisation process presented, not only for the UK generally but also for the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation as the organisation grew. Furthermore, starting in 1947 makes it possible to highlight how the non-involvement of certain Commonwealth countries provided no practical impediment to Commonwealth defence cooperation more generally.

The end date of this study is, perhaps, less contentious. The deployment of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force in Rhodesia represents a clear manifestation of a new type of Commonwealth defence cooperation based on the collective political will of the entirety of the Commonwealth. In addition, it is worth venturing a little beyond 1981 to briefly explore Commonwealth military relations with respect to the Falklands war of 1982. These two events together aptly illustrate how far Commonwealth defence cooperation had drifted from its original intent. The former was the manifestation of a relatively new but increasingly popular and respected form of international military cooperation. The latter was based on older principles that had been disavowed by the post-1971 Commonwealth and was increasingly complicated to conduct, operate, and request even amongst Commonwealth countries who were favourably inclined to such cooperation.

---

[53] D. MacKenzie, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle: Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland 1939-49* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986) p192

[54] This was at the heart of the 'two-nation theory' in which it was supposed that the partition of the British Raj between a Muslim and non-Muslim states would be best course of action. W.R. Louis, A. Low, R. Winks & P. Marshall *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography* (Oxford University Press, 1999) p 258

Unexplored elements

Chief amongst the topics only cursorily examined is the new member states of the Commonwealth, and how civil servants, legislatures, and executives thought about – and decided upon – the future direction of the Commonwealth. For the purposes of this study the reasons behind why the new states approached the Commonwealth in the manner that they did are less relevant than the subsequent reactions they prompted from key Commonwealth countries (i.e. Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK). It is the consequences of those reactions by those countries which had driven Commonwealth military cooperation that are at the centre of this study. This should not be understood to imply that the history of the relationship of these new states with the Commonwealth is comparatively less important to the development of the Commonwealth, indeed India and Pakistan's relationship alone had such a deleterious outcome on post-war Commonwealth defence cooperation that it merits specific attention in its own right, but sadly such attention cannot be afforded here. Similarly, some instances of Commonwealth defence cooperation such as the Commonwealth's approach to events in the Caribbean in the 1970s and 1980s, have received only scant attention.[55] This is especially true of the Commonwealth reaction to events in Belize and Grenada. All of these, however, fall outside of the scope of this study.

Consideration of the activities of the intelligence services of different states, those belonging to both the Old and New Commonwealths, has been deliberately omitted. This includes such things as the intelligence cooperation amongst Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US and the UK (such as Five Eyes). The issue of access to appropriate and reliable source material in sufficient quantity and quality to be considered useful can often impede research, and this is especially true with respect to the intelligence services. For the purposes of this thesis there is a distinct line drawn between intelligence cooperation and defence cooperation. Although the activities of the former informed the operations of the latter they are considered to be sufficiently distinct that they are not addressed directly here. However, some cross-over is to be expected, especially on intelligence exchanges with respect to the availability of nuclear weapons to Commonwealth countries and nuclear strike plans.[56] There is, however, much more that can be said on the subject in future years as more archival records are released and new avenues of inquiry are opened for more thorough exploration.

[55] Comparatively more study has been done on Anglo-American relations with respect to the decolonisation process in the West Indies. In particular see G. Williams 'Keeping a line open: Britain and the 1979 coup in Grenada' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39 (2011) p 480

This thesis gives limited attention to any particular individual. While every effort has been made to highlight some of the key personalities at different stages, the reality is that they are few and far between. This thesis has a broad scope, not only chronologically but also thematically, and practical concerns prevented the sort of in-depth analysis into the actions of any individual person that might otherwise have been included. Practical considerations aside, the focus on official state actions and responses has allowed a narrative to emerge that is defined by diplomatic conflicts driven by competing national interests, and international relations more generally. This is a particularly useful perspective as it showcases the interactions between states on a global stage at a time of immense geopolitical and ideological struggle. While this approach has its limitations, it has the advantage of capturing that interaction in a coherent and sensible manner that avoids over-emphasising personal contributions and any potential misrepresentations of activity and actions that may have otherwise occurred.

Structure

The structure of the thesis is chronological in nature. There are six major chapters, each separated by a shift in either policy or some political directive or consideration with respect to the trend of Commonwealth military cooperation. This should be noted as being distinct from any specific consequences of major events for particular actors. The distinction is particularly important with respect to the Suez crisis of 1956. The crisis is addressed as a national issue for the UK, albeit one with international implications, and as an example of a longer running issue of poor Commonwealth communication and growing divergence in Commonwealth political agendas. It fits into a prolonged and uncertain period of uneasy Commonwealth defence relations throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. It is in that vein that the six main chapters which follow address the four key phases of the development of Commonwealth defence relations throughout the post-war period.

The first phase, and first chapter, concerns itself with the dramatic change in the British strategic situation following the independence and partition of the British Raj in 1947. It explores the

[56] Discussions between British officials and Australian service representatives in London in the early 1960s explored the likely employment of tactical nuclear weapons against a conventional attack with the express purpose of using those weapons to force the enemy to pause its attack. It being considered that a retaliation on civilian populations as a response in this scenario to be 'not merely futile but dangerous'. Although this thinking was limited to Europe and 'only general consideration [had been given] to the particular problems of the use of nuclear weapons in the Far East. Broadly it was believed that the same principles applied...' - 'Note of a discussion between UK officials and Sir Reginald Pollar, Chief of the Australian Army Staff – in London'. 6 September 1961 DO 164/800/015 UKNA

Middle East Defence Conference in 1951 which outlined the Commonwealth's plans for a global approach to Commonwealth deployments in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union. This initial post-war period still held much of the trappings of Commonwealth defence cooperation from past wars through its effective continuation of the Imperial defence concept. There were holdovers from the peace treaties at the end of the Second World War which also served to further Commonwealth cooperative efforts, such as the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. This first phase highlighted a relatively stable period in defence matters amongst the Commonwealth. However, there were indications of problems even at this early stage, especially from Canada and South Africa.

The second phase, and chapter, marks the beginning of a long process of transition in defence relations amongst Commonwealth member states. There were some limited successes in ensuring cooperation in the post-war period, most notably with the inclusion of an Indian contribution to the 1st Commonwealth Division in Korea.[57] Such early successes would be undermined by later developments. New political realities and technological developments emerged in the 1950s which undermined the potential that had been demonstrated in the Defence Conference of 1951 and in the 1st Commonwealth Division. A focus on national priorities coupled with regional rather than globally based cooperative efforts and organisations had now taken hold.[58] This new approach ran counter to the form of previous Commonwealth defence cooperation which had been predicated upon a global basis for its collective defence.[59] Developments later in the decade led to an increased, if at times more awkward, level of cooperation between Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, and the UK in South-East Asia. This marked the start of what proved to be one of the most fruitful defence relationships throughout the Commonwealth since the Second World War.

The third phase, and arguably the most complicated and intricate of the four, began in approximately 1960 and lasted until 1971. No fewer than three chapters are concerned with this

---

[57] P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies towards Japan, China and Korea 1948-53,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) p 194

[58] Specifically it was said that 'all like-minded governments should cooperate in building up collective security from another angle, that of regional security,' -Memorandum by the UK Government 'Meeting of Prime Ministers 'The World Situation and its Defence Aspects' PMM(49)1 23 September 1949 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

[59] Indeed there was an element of thought within the Commonwealth Relations Office that this new approach was not conducive to continued Commonwealth relationship, especially on defence matters. There were particular concerns that Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa may feel excluded given that they were not involved in NATO planning, and that this would be 'one of the considerations which the UK will have in mind' when considering expanding NATO. -Telegram No. 1214 From the High Commissioner for Canada, London, to the Secretary of State for External Affairs 17 May 1951. RG 25 Volume 5963 File 50227 50 Part I LAC

particularly unsettled time in Commonwealth affairs. The rapid expansion of the Commonwealth during this period is certainly one of the driving causes behind this turbulent time. The first of the three chapters, chapter three, deals with Canada and South Africa. The two countries had very different responses to the expansion of the Commonwealth. Lester Pearson's suggestion that the UN should create a peace-keeping force set in motion a relationship between Canada's armed forces and UN peace-keeping initiatives that further undermined Canadian interest in traditional Commonwealth defence cooperation. The second half of chapter three concerns South Africa, and particularly its effective expulsion from the Commonwealth. Chapter four addresses the Anglo-Australian and New Zealand relationship which continued in South-East Asia and was, eventually, expanded to include Malaysia and Singapore. Finally, chapter five broaches the increased level of technical cooperation amongst Commonwealth member states, not only in the field of conventional weapons and missiles but also in the development of nuclear technology. Although somewhat of a side-lined affair with few shared practical outcomes the sheer scale of effort involved in this endeavour, coupled with its political significance, marked it as an important aspect of Commonwealth defence relations.[60] It also highlights one of the major aspects of defence relations: that the results of defence research and procurement choices lasted long after political agreement on such matters had ceased. Exchanges on nuclear technology between Canada and India is an example of this, but so too is the procurement of conventional hardware, especially warships which often served for decades after commissioning.[61]

The last phase, and final chapter, covers the 'New Commonwealth' from the Declaration of Singapore until the Falklands War. This ten-year period very strongly illustrates the changes that had happened to the Commonwealth, and highlights the implications those changes had for Commonwealth defence relations. Insofar as defence cooperation was concerned the Commonwealth had started as an organisation involved in the territorial integrity of its fellow member states – the Imperial defence

[60] Review of the Joint Project Part 1 1960 DO 169 UKNA

[61] Other commentators have divided this period differently focusing on key points in 1963 and again in 1967. The complicated nature of the 1960s, and its profound implications for the UK and indeed the Commonwealth, can encourage excessive compartmentalization as each event seems worthy of its own particular box. For the purposes of this study the withdrawal/ejection of South Africa and the British 'withdrawal' from the Far East mark distinct and appropriate bookends. Other divisions of the post-war British timeline can be found in many other studies notably D. Austin, *'The Transfer of Power: Why and How',* in W. Morris-Jones & G. Fischer *Decolonisation and After* (Oxford: Frank Cass Ltd, 1980); J. Gallagher, *The Decline. Revival and Fall of the British Empire* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1982); J. Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1988). See also J. Darwin's, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Oxford: Basil Blacwell, 1991), A. Low, *The Eclipse of Empire* (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Also W. R. Louis., *'The Dissolution of the British Empire',* in W. M. Louis and J. Brown (eds.). *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

theory. It developed into an organisation concerned with policing its own members and ensuring acceptable domestic policies, even ostracising members as necessary and associating itself with the deployment of military forces in the pursuit of that concern.[62] However, it also became an organisation that failed to concern itself with the safety and security of its fellow member states.[63] How and why this remarkable change occurred is the core question posed here. This thesis offers an explanation as to the reasoning behind this radical development of the Commonwealth.

Conclusion

That radical development, however, could not have been different to the prevailing military plans of the Commonwealth in the late 1940s. Commonwealth military cooperation was relatively strong in the post-war period, even if some cracks were evident. Stirrings of independent foreign and defence policies in Commonwealth countries, especially in Canada and South Africa, no longer inextricably tied the Dominions to the UK and were early indications of future difficulties that would plague cooperation in later decades. The UK's financial difficulties, and across the Sterling area more generally, further weakened cross-Commonwealth cooperation. Finally, the strength of the US and the overarching political dynamic between the US and the USSR created a backdrop against which the individual troubles amongst Commonwealth countries were viewed, with concerning implications for continued Commonwealth defence cooperation.

---

[62] This was noted as being repeatedly insisted upon by the 'Afro-Asian members' while further noting that they were making this insistence despite it being well known that 'one other member regarded [the issue] as domestic to itself'. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

[63] Although Margaret Thatcher would later comment that she felt that 'the Commonwealth, with particular exception of India, had been very supportive' (see M. Thatcher *The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd, 2012) p 182) the reality of that support was particular to the time that it was given, and in fact was rather less complimentary when viewed in relation to the support that the Commonwealth had provided when the UK had previously been in need of assistance during war.

Chapter 1: The State of the Commonwealth, 1947-51

Introduction

This chapter outlines the military and political circumstances and objectives of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK from 1947 until 1951. It highlights the successes and failures of cooperation amongst those five countries and identifies how this was considered to be Commonwealth defence cooperation even though it often did not involve every member of the Commonwealth. Finally it examines the implications of changes in military technology to Commonwealth-wide strategy plans. In so doing it ties into the overall argument made in this thesis by noting the relative stability of joint Commonwealth defence action in the period, as well as the warning signs that were readily apparent to its long-term continuation. Furthermore, it points out that joint Commonwealth defence plans actively responded to changes in military technology albeit slowly. This is presented in the chapter with a breakdown of the post-war situation in the Commonwealth and identifying the international pressures that affected the five aforementioned countries, including the addition and loss of states in the Commonwealth. Successes and failures of Commonwealth defence cooperation are highlighted through an analysis of the creation of and contributions to the 1st Commonwealth Division in the Korean War. The chapter explores some of the implications of the development of nuclear weaponry by the USSR and how it might have affected military strategy and cooperation. It finishes with an analysis of the changed membership of the Commonwealth. Before delving into that, however, it is first necessary to set the background for the expansion of the Commonwealth in the late 1940s.

In 1947 a significant step was made towards an ongoing process that would ultimately see the introduction of a large number of territories into the Commonwealth. The independence of Pakistan and India, 'within the Commonwealth' as the phrasing of the time went, illustrated a changing political scene that foreshadowed a much broader series of changes that would fundamentally alter the character of the Commonwealth as an organisation.[1] Although arguably the inclusion of the Irish Free State into the British Commonwealth in 1922 was the first such step, the fallout of independence of the Irish Free State on the broader questions of military cooperation for the Commonwealth paled in comparison to

[1] Yielding to the political ambitions of a colonial territory by granting it independence, while ensuring an agreeable outlook of its new political establishment, was pursued in the interests of preserving British influence. - J. Darwin, 'British decolonisation since 1945: A pattern or a puzzle' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) p 193

the profound implications of independence for India and Pakistan. Independence for India and Pakistan came at a time when the existing members of the Commonwealth were still recovering from the effects of the Second World War. Ongoing defence issues relating to the security of the British Empire and occupied territory in Germany and Japan came under further strain resulting from the uncertain economic situation.[2] These issues would have been problematic to address in a domestic context alone. Global events further complicated matters given the increased international scrutiny of internal issues. The political stand-off between the US and the USSR involved countries on both sides of that ideological divide which responded to defence issues and international events in the light of that tension.[3] Additionally, agitation for political freedoms in territory previously controlled by imperial powers both within the UK and outside of it was increasing.[4] This surge in nationalist feeling was often aggravated by different actors throughout the Cold War. This resulted in an extended period of uncertainty and difficulty for the UK on an international level that complicated national difficulties, with consequences for Commonwealth defence cooperation. The recent development of nuclear weapons, and particularly the development of a nuclear weapon by the USSR, added to this instability as this rapid technological progress threatened to utterly change the way warfare was conducted.

In this context it is suggested that Commonwealth defence cooperation was, initially at least, largely unchanged by the independence of India and Pakistan. In fact, arguably the independence of India and Pakistan demonstrated how Commonwealth defence cooperation could have continued over the course of the next few decades. At this point, it is worth distinguishing between the UK's strategic concerns and the realities of defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. It did not necessarily follow that events which fundamentally affected the UK's strategic position harmed the prospect of continued Commonwealth defence cooperation. The independence of India and Pakistan was a perfect example of where this distinction can be useful. Although the implications for the UK with respect to the loss of the British Raj were understandably profound, not only in terms of the change in control and the threat to the order of the Commonwealth, no such negative implications existed for Commonwealth defence cooperation. At least, not in the short term. In fact, the independence of India and its

[2] J. Baylis, *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO 1942-1949* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1993), p 76

[3] Indeed there were ongoing concerns in successive governments of both Australia and New Zealand that the increased tension between the US and the USSR would result in a recurrence of American isolationism. The foreign policies of both countries were thus directed not only at ensuring American support in the Far East but of endeavouring to prevent a repeat of American interwar policy. - Minutes of 1st Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 3 June 1953 MG26L Volume 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) UKNA

[4] R. Davis, *British Decolonisation 1918-1984* (Oxford: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013) p 7

contribution to the 1st Commonwealth Division, for instance, was indicative of how new states to the Commonwealth might engage in cooperative defence ventures. This was marred, somewhat, by Pakistan's lack of involvement but even here it is clear that their absence did not fundamentally affect the fact that it was a 'Commonwealth' Division and such flexibility to nomenclature could continue to be applied.[5]

The prospects for future defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth with respect to Canada and South Africa, however, were less clear. Indeed there was a degree of unease amongst Canadian policy-makers in any coordination on defence issues which involved the UK unless it also involved the US.[6] This was not solely an issue with respect to a preference for coordination with the US. Canadian anxiety was based on a history of perceived bias in Anglo-Canadian cooperation that favoured the UK.[7] Canadian deployments to a post-war British occupation force were not seen until late 1951, when the 27th Canadian Infantry Brigade was deployed as a constituent element of a division of I Corps of the British Army on the Rhine. Although Canadian involvement in BAOR was to continue until 1970 this was undertaken as the Canadian contribution to NATO rather than as part of a collective Commonwealth initiative. This issue was highlighted clearly in June 1971 when the Canadian detachment was redeployed to a US sector.[8]

This clearly contrasted with the positions of the Australian & New Zealand governments as both deployed forces which formed a significant element of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. Although some attempts were made to pursue a joint Australian-Canadian policy a divergence of

---

5 There is some debate as to the extent of the effect that the independence of India and Pakistan had on British military strategy. Tinker remarks upon how little British strategy itself changed in the context of independence, while Goldsworthy comments that the British needed a stable colonial atmosphere and that anything which might affect that – amongst other things – was to be avoided. See H. Tinker, 'The Contraction of Empire in Asia 1945-48: The Military Dimension' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,*16 (1988) p 230, and D. Goldsworthy, 'Keeping Change Within Bounds: Aspects of Colonial Policy during the Churchill and Eden governments 1951-57' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 18 (1990) p 102

6 The post-war Canadian government had formed the view, in the dying stages of the Second World War, that 'if the US remains aloof and if consequently the UK is forced to rely principally upon alliances with European powers, Canada will be less likely to participate in such arrangements'. - Canadian Defence Relations with the British Commonwealth 14 December 1946 RG 25 Volume 5724 PHP44 LAC

7 There was also a general level of unease in the Canadian administration, both during the Second World War and after, that the preponderance of British representation on a joint committee was invariably weighted in favour of the British representatives. -Preliminary paper on Canada-UK Defence Relationship Part I 24 November 1944 RG 25 Volume 5724 LAC

8 This was spurred on through a combination of a Canadian reorganisation of its armed forces. - G. Watson & R. Rinaldi, *The British Army in Germany: An Organisational History 1947-2004* (Newport: Tiger Lily publications, 2005) p 26

views – in addition to the difficulties posed by the geography – thwarted such arrangements.[9] Similarly the difficulties of securing South African support for Commonwealth issues rose exponentially once the Second World War had ended. The issue of race and racial relations, coupled with the victory of the National Party in 1948, complicated the deployment of South African military forces overseas.[10] South Africa's domestic difficulties with race and racial relations came under scrutiny in an international context as well, especially from new members of the Commonwealth. The focus from new countries on these issues was considered to be, in part, driven by active interference from the USSR, an activity which was thought to be fundamental to the Soviet ideology.[11] Whether true or not, the practical implications of this domestic policy change and international focus undermined potential Commonwealth defence cooperation in a state which was already known to be reticent with its support for Commonwealth-wide defence issues.

This era of rapid and energetic political manoeuvring, both by the USSR and new political actors, was complicated by the development of new technology, particularly nuclear weapons technology. The advent of the atomic bomb formed part of the technical impetus which presaged an end to the centralised organisation of the defence of far-flung territories. However, existing military thought and strategic doctrine from the Second World War continued until the early 1950s. It was not until the dispersed deployment of nuclear weapons was sufficiently advanced that a re-examination of strategic doctrine was undertaken. This gap between the end of the Second World War and the change in strategic doctrine effectively created a period in which the strategic concepts which had governed Commonwealth military thought continued to remain applicable to the broad principles of global defence cooperation. The dying embers of long established imperially-based defensive coordination in strategic matters[12] would flare again briefly in 1951 with the Middle East Defence Conference. This

[9] J.F. Hilliker, 'Distant Ally: Canadian Relations with Australia during the Second World War' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 13 (1984) p 63

[10] N. Waddy, 'The fork in the road? British Reactions to the Election of an Apartheid Government in South Africa, May 1948' *Historia* 55 (2010) p 78

[11] The Canadian position at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in 1957 was that the Soviet ideology was such that their 'system and ideology prevent them' from following any other course of action. - Foreign Office brief for Cabinet: Committee on the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference: Relation with the USSR 13 June 1957. The British were also concerned that Soviet ideology ran to that same effect. Annex to Telegram no. 1523 'Soviet Intentions in the Mideast – UK brief for Prime Minister's Meeting' 25 June 1957. Both can be found in: RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[12] Strategic matters had been a point of mass-consultation and coordination amongst the Commonwealth since the end of the First World War, and included even such agreements that, in reality, would influence only the UK directly, but would have a significant trickle-down effect such as the Washington Naval treaties. - P. Wigly, & N. Hillmer 'Defining the First British Commonwealth: The Hankey Memoranda on the 1926 Imperial Conference' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979) p 110

Conference was one of the last attempts to organize the defence of vital regions of the Commonwealth on a global basis. It stood in sharp contrast to the efforts of regional defence organisations which developed after 1951. It was a suitably foreboding end for a near century-long tradition of defensive organisation and cooperation amongst the various political entities within the British Empire and its Commonwealth.

The post-war Commonwealth

In 1947 the UK was still recovering from the Second World War. Wartime conscription continued until 1949, and effectively remained in operation under the National Service Act 1948 until December 1960.[13] The last conscripts were discharged a little more than two years later. The extended period of National Service after the end of the Second World War was due to the unsettled nature of the immediate post-war period. Many areas of the British Empire required permanent garrisons to ensure political stability.[14] The constant draw of labour to the armed forces further complicated a precarious economic situation and undermined a return to peace-time industrial capability. The start of the Cold War, the spread of Communism and increased political agitation, internally and externally, for a withdrawal from a variety of imperial territories created circumstances in which military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth could continue. Such cooperation could be used as an opportunity to preserve British influence and prestige through the Commonwealth. Indeed, some efforts in that respect developed directly out of post-war structures. The framework for the 1st Commonwealth Division which would see service in Korea in 1951, for instance, was based on the British Commonwealth Occupation Force Japan structure.

In general, however, the underlying British endeavour to preserve influence and prestige through the Commonwealth[15] would never amount to anything significant. Despite British aims regarding the Commonwealth, and widespread assumption outside the Commonwealth, in reality little opportunity existed for the UK to influence the new organisation as it expanded. In that respect, British

[13] For a detailed analysis on the limited differences between conscription and National Service see Vinen R. *National Service: A Generation in Uniform* (London: Penguin UK) 2014.

[14] D. French, *Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy 1945-1971* (Oxford University Press, 2012) p 6

[15] The effects of this manifest throughout the period, and are especially apparent in Anglo-American relations. One such example was at an early meeting of the ABC (American, British, and Canadian army) planners in April 1948. The British representatives committed forces not only from the UK, but also from throughout the Commonwealth. When questioned, however, they confessed that they had not spoke directly with the various members of the Commonwealth regarding their specific contributions. - Chiefs of Staff CTE 23 February 1949 RG25 Volume 222 File 1400/23

efforts at influencing other countries in the period paled in comparison to both the US and the USSR. Both the US and the USSR were implementing much broader, more comprehensive efforts of cooperation in their respective spheres of influence than the UK managed through the Commonwealth.[16] The consequences of decolonisation and the growth of American and Russian influence around the globe profoundly undermined the possibility of the UK building on its efforts to use the Commonwealth as a vehicle for the preservation of prestige and global influence.

It was undoubtedly detrimental to the prospects of Commonwealth defence cooperation that there were early signs that existing Dominions within the Commonwealth were shifting away from cooperative Commonwealth defence efforts. Canadian foreign policy, in particular, demonstrated an eager desire to pursue its government's own goals. The difficulties involved in the Dominions operating independent foreign and military policies surfaced in two key ways. First, the growth of US influence in implementing military policy. The Canadians were caught by their geographical position between the US and the USSR. Indeed efforts at American-Canadian military cooperation had been ongoing since the beginning of the Second World War.[17] Although not always without tension, these were usually amicably resolved.[18] It was not, however, until the development of nuclear weapons that this cooperation became an imperative for the defence of the US. The deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and strategic aircraft which, given rapid advancements in various underlying technologies, could fly non-stop from the USSR to the US had attracted significant attention and concern.[19] Early efforts at safeguarding this northerly approach from the USSR to the US were, largely, unsuccessful. The Pinetree Line and the Mid-Canada Line were casualties of the rapid development in aircraft and weapons technology. Such rapid advancement necessitated extensive cooperation between Canada and the US. That level of persistent cooperative effort in the interest of national survival further cultivated their close defence relationship. It became a relationship solidly built on mutual defence issues in a way which was no longer shared to the same degree by Canada and

[16] The tensions between, and within, the two major political blocs are outlined thoroughly in M. Heiss & S. Papacosma (eds.), *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts* (Kent: Kent State University Press) 2005, viii - xv.

[17] Appendix to Chiefs of Staff Committee Memorandum: Meeting of Prime Ministers Commonwealth Defence Cooperation – Canadian position 5 October 1948 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

[18] Prime Minister's Conference: Second Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[19] The first Russian intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead was believed to have been successfully tested in 1957, although this would not be deployed operationally until 1959. - Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 29/57 General Staff Intelligence Committee 88/INT/138/3 Russian Guided Weapons 5 August 1957 MV 208/151 SANDFA. Indeed by 1962 it was expected that the Russians would be able to reach even the southern states of the US, if re-fuelled mid-flight, with their strategic aircraft. - Summary of Main Factors MV 208/151 SANDFA

the UK, much less so between Canada and more distant countries of the Commonwealth.[20]

Secondly there was a fundamental shift in the domestic political atmosphere in Canada. There was a new perspective on the new dichotomy between the US and the USSR that placed Canada firmly in the position of what it described as a 'Middle Power'.[21] This analysis failed to account for their involvement with the UK, let alone the Commonwealth, when it came to joint military cooperation. This new political-military thought eventually culminated in significant interest in peacekeeping operations and contributions to such efforts through the UN. Indeed Canadian peacekeepers were a major element of the first UN peacekeeping force – the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) – in the aftermath of the Suez crisis.[22] Both of these shifts – the growing importance of defence cooperation with the US, and the political desire to pursue independent military objectives – were actively counter-productive to the development and continuation of existing Commonwealth defence cooperation.

The Anglo-Australian/New Zealand relationship was rather different. The Antipodean Dominions contribution to British, and nominally Commonwealth, defence structures remained active and involved. Australian and New Zealand involvement in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan continued a long-standing tradition of Australian and New Zealand forces serving in distinctly British, and later Commonwealth, force structures.

Much like the UK both Australia and New Zealand operated a form of conscription in the post-war period. Unlike the British model, personnel inducted into the armed forces through either the Australian National Service or New Zealand's Compulsory Military Training were not to be deployed outside of their respective islands after the end of the war.[23] Conscription in both countries did, however, effectively free their voluntary professional forces to deploy on joint endeavours throughout

---

[20] Additionally there was a growing basis for the relationship on an economic level. The massive growth in American economic interests in Canada were such that by 1956 they had outstripped comparable British interests in the country. - Mr. Diefenbarker's remarks at the Prime Ministers Conference eighth meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[21] H. Herstien, L. J. Hughes, & R.C. Kirbyson C*hallenge & Survival: The History of Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970) p 411

[22] This would include the appointment of a Canadian Major General to command the force in the field. - General Assembly Resolution 5 November 1956 A/RES/1000(ES-I)

[23] See National Service Act 1951 (Australia). Section 26 outlines how these National Servicemen were not be deployed outside of Australia, and similarly the Military Training Act 1949 for New Zealand.

South-East Asia.[24] Both Australia and New Zealand also responded with contributions to the British forces in the Malayan Emergency in 1950. Initially the response to this request was limited to a handful of aircraft (specifically Dakota transport aircraft from both Australia and New Zealand, and Lincoln Bombers from Australia).[25] Australia and New Zealand expanded these contributions throughout the decade. In an early indication of the importance of nomenclature the command formation under which these aircraft were attached to was renamed following the Australian and New Zealand deployments. In 1946 it was renamed to the RAF Air Command Far East. In 1949 following the introduction of Australian and New Zealand squadrons it was re-designated the Far East Air Force.[26]

There is a stark difference in the approach taken to cooperative endeavours of a military nature between Canada and the two Antipodean Dominions. Although the internal politics may have differed greatly between these Dominions, their respective geographical positions also presented different viable options. By circumstance of geography the Canadian position was such that involvement in the US sphere of influence was an inevitability. The same was not true for either Australia or New Zealand. Both Australia and New Zealand were separated by thousands of miles of sea from both the US and the UK. Australian and New Zealand policy-makers were very much aware of the distance involved and much of the defence and foreign policies of Australia and New Zealand were directed at ensuring the continuity of US and UK interests in South-East Asia.[27]

By contrast South Africa did not fit neatly into this categorisation of geography alone due to the extent and publicity regarding its internal troubles. Like Australia and New Zealand it was separated from the direct and immediate interest of both the US or the USSR.[28] However, its internal politics prevented the deployment of any South African force outside of its home territory. While Ian Smuts had

---

[24] In a minute from the South African Embassy in Australian to the South Africa Minister for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria the introduction of selective military conscription in Australia was outlined as a method of ensuring that Australia's defence would rest on a defensive perimeter away from Australian territory proper. - Annex to Minute No. S.36/0 19 November 1964 MV103/1 Australiese-Aangeleenthede SANDFA

[25] Telegram no. 352 Commonwealth Relations Office to UK High Commissioner 20 April 1950 FO 371/84602 UKNA

[26] This should not to be confused with the US command that had the same name.

[27] This was at the heart of the Forward Defence aspect of Australian and New Zealand Defence Policy. - A. Smith, *South-East Asia and New Zealand: A History of Regional and Bilateral Relations* (Victoria: Victoria University Press, 2005) p 95

[28] Although there was an ongoing American concern for the security of South Africa, particularly South Africa's uranium mines, this does not seem to have translated into active cooperation or technical exchange on military matters. South Africa was, for instance, rebuffed even in requests for air search radars that would be specifically deployed to defend its key industrial areas – which included its uranium mines. - Air Defence Scheme Letter from Minister of Defence (South Africa) F.C. Erasmus to Mr. H.A. Byroade, American Ambassador to South Africa 9 April 1957 MV 204/149 SANDFA

led the United National South African Party into supporting the Commonwealth war effort following the resignation of Barry Hertzog in 1939, local support for aligning with the UK remained mixed throughout the war.[29] That view persisted after the war ended. This reluctance to involvement in the Commonwealth never fully dissipated. It was not until the end of Smut's tenure as Prime Minister and the ascendancy of the National Party that there started a definite drift away from the Commonwealth. The policy of racial segregation which had been espoused by the National Party provoked an international outcry. South Africa's continued membership of the Commonwealth subsequently proved increasingly problematic.

Concerns in the South African government as to the growing unrest amongst the local black population, amongst other more general post-war concerns, contributed to a general reluctance to deploy troops outside of South Africa. Indeed, a policy was set a few years later in 1956 that prevented the deployment of ground forces of the Union Defence Force (from 1957 the South African Defence Force) anywhere outside of South Africa.[30] This reluctance resulted in South African involvement during the Korean War being limited to a single air squadron (2 Squadron SAAF).[31] There was no Commonwealth formation for air forces during that war. Instead command of the air forces which were sent to Korea were organized under the US Fifth Air Force.[32] Despite this involvement the South African record of engagement and cooperation in the post-war period remained exceptionally limited. South Africa's involvement and cooperation with the Commonwealth would cease entirely following their withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961.[33]

The culmination of these issues in all five countries prevented the immediate post-war framework that had been established from developing into more meaningful cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. A further complication existed during these post-war years that while the UK was still

[29] N. Stultz, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1974), p 64

[30] Letter from High Commissioner Jordan to Secretary of External Affairs 13 August 1956 PS 28/8 MV 200 Verdediging van Afrika SANDFA

[31] Minute for Prime Minister 'Korea' 18 December 1952 MV 128/4 Boesoek Ran Die Verre Ooste: Koerant en Ander Verslae SANDFA

[32] R.F. Futrell, L.S. Moseley, & A.F. Simpson. *The US Air Force in Korea 1950-1953* (Whitefish: Literary Licensing LLC, 2012), p 28

[33] According to the final communique issued by the Commonwealth at the Prime Ministers' Meeting of March 1961 it was made clear that the South African government had withdrawn its application for continued membership in the Commonwealth 'in the light of the views expressed [by the other members of the Commonwealth] and the indications of their future intentions regarding the racial policy of the Union government.' - Commonwealth Conference Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 8-17 March 1961 Final Communique Annex II RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

the glue that held Commonwealth defence cooperation together allowing other Commonwealth countries to take the lead on a regional basis was acknowledged even at this early stage.[34] A combination of stretched British forces[35] and strident national desires in Australia to cement its position in the Far East had already resulted in the widespread deployment of Australian and New Zealand forces in the occupying force of Japan.[36] The groundwork had been laid and noted, but the full potential of this was never realised.[37] It is indicative of the nature of Commonwealth defence relations that it was not until the 1980s that there existed a formal system of defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth which did not involve the UK.[38]

The turbulent political scene affected all countries in the Commonwealth, and remained a cause of concern for the prospect of continued Commonwealth cooperation. South Africa's involvement had gone from conflicted to effectively non-existent following Smuts' defeat at the polls. Any potential Canadian interest increasingly struggled for attention against the more immediate concern of its own safety and its position on the world stage. The situation, however, was not entirely bleak. Indeed there were a number of examples of cooperation that hinted at the direction of things to come. Australian and New Zealand cooperation with British forces in the Far East continued strongly, and if it never developed into its full potential this could not necessarily have been known in the late 1940s. The independence of India was not met with the withdrawal of India from Commonwealth defence considerations. Even if the Indian contribution bordered on the inconsequential in comparison to its available forces its involvement with the 1st Commonwealth Division challenged the idea that a

[34] The British government had noted that 'Australia was able, however, to make progress after the end of the war [the Second World War] on taking the lead in Commonwealth defence arrangements in the Pacific and in South-East Asia.' specifically it was further recognised that the creation of plans for the defence of the ANZAM region rested with the 'ANZAM planning machinery [which] was located in Melbourne.' - Historical Note on attempts to achieve Combined Strategic Planning by Britain, US, Australia and New Zealand DO 164 52/77/11 UKNA

[35] Even important port cities, such as Hong Kong, were recognised in 1952 as having garrisons so small as to be ineffectual even in the pursuit of maintaining public order, let alone holding their ground for a sufficient length of time for a force to be raised. - M. Chi-Kwan, 'Defence of Decolonisation? Britain, the US, and the Hong Kong Question in 1957' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33 (2005), p 67

[36] It has been suggested that a combination of Australian ambitions and British encouragement forged a path towards heavy Australian involvement in South-East Asia until 1971. - G. Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987) p 55

[37] There were significant and lengthy discussions in the British Cabinet in 1964 regarding the possible contribution of ever greater Commonwealth support, especially in the Far East. This would go on to suggest that the Royal Navy need merely make a 'contribution' to the defence East of the Suez. Unfortunately much of the content of these discussions have been redacted or destroyed prior to full release. The remnants indicating only that discussions took place, and brief snippets as to the form of the British 'contribution'. The file also contains mentions of the possibility of a 'Commonwealth Chiefs of Staff' to be based out of the Ministry of Defence in London. - PREM 11/4731 DO(64)59 UKNA

[38] This would take the form of a Regional Security Agreement amongst a number of Caribbean islands. This was an initiative which was directed at internal security cooperation as well as securing against the same threat externally.

growing Commonwealth that consisted of increasingly independent and divergent views could not find sufficient common ground for joint military operations.

The international context

It is impossible to speak of any cooperative effort during the Cold War without mentioning the prevailing political atmosphere of uncertainty and competing national interests – even amongst allies. Increased tensions between the US and the USSR rapidly dominated the political scene in an era of ailing imperial powers and growing independence movements. In this regard the USSR was better positioned than the US. The USSR offered a particularly populist and compelling ideological view of the world to the new states both far more attractive than the Western alternative, and associated with imperialism. There was considerable effort expended, particularly in the UK, to ensure that new states were not led by governments that had pro-Communist leanings. In that, successive US administrations supported the UK. Their support, however, was rarely wholehearted or overly generous.[39] Also, their support was often undermined by competition between the UK and the US in specific areas – especially in relation to trade.[40] While US administrations were keen to retain the UK, and the newly independent states that emerged from the British empire, within a Western sphere of influence British imperial rule was a major political sticking point.[41] Ultimately through a mix of financial pressure and growing internal and external objections the British Empire was dismantled at an increasing pace in a process of decolonisation that had only intermittent successes in the creation of viable states.[42] This steady release of new states provided a vast battleground for conflict between the US and the USSR, and occasionally

---

[39] This is particularly true of their persistent and consistent drive in favour of forcing the convertibility of the pound Sterling and obliging the British Sterling area to be opened up in favour of foreign, effectively American, involvement in those markets. - A. Hinds, 'Sterling and Imperial Policy 1945-51' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 15 (1987), p 149

[40] Mr. Havenga of South Africa was moved to comment at the Prime Minister's conference of 1953 that the US while 'anxious for us to move towards multilateralism [in trade] but it was not helping to achieve it.' which prompted a follow-on comment by Mr. Holland of New Zealand who complained that the powerful agricultural lobby in the US had prompted the implementation of protective tariffs on dried milk that resulted in the cheaper to produce and ship New Zealand version from competing in the American market. - MG26L Volume 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) Minutes of 5th Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 9 June 1953 LAC. Also see D. McCourt, 'Reassessing the Withdrawal,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 20 (2009) p 462

[41] Although there was certainly a reluctance to further prop up the British empire any more than strictly necessary, and successive American administrations were keen to enforce their preferred economic policies insofar as they did not result in the total collapse of British economic they handled diplomatic disagreements much less bullishly, and failed cooperative endeavours and differences of opinion, such as in the Far East and in India, were typically resolved if not amicably then at least through mutual ignorance. - H.W. Brands 'India and Pakistan in American Strategic Planning 1947-54: the Commonwealth as a Collaborator' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 15 (1986) p 51

[42] W.R. Louis, & R. Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonisation' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 22 (1994) p 493

the imperial powers themselves too.[43] Amongst the efforts undertaken to ensure that these new states were both viable entities and were inclined to a Western viewpoint was a concentration on federal structures[44] and regional organisations. The growth of regional efforts, amongst the imperial powers in Europe and throughout the world, demonstrated conflicting objectives. For example, while the primary goal was to prevent the rise of governments in new states which adhered to a Communist ideology US administrations were keen to ensure that former imperial territory was opened to US influence and economic interests.[45]

This was also true of US economic support to the UK. Here financial support offered by the US to the UK came with the price tag of the steady dissolution of economic policies that favoured the Commonwealth and the Sterling economic bloc. This included the convertibility of the pound Sterling and similar measures.[46] It was only the sheer scale of the catastrophe that resulted from implementing the convertibility of Sterling that forced the US to accept that the British financial system simply could not cope with this scale of change in such a short time-frame.[47] This difficulty was well understood as a distinct possibility at the time the request was made.[48]

---

43 This was especially true of ongoing French difficulties in its colonies. Although some were caused by Soviet and Communist agitation, others were the result of mismanaged expectations in the aftermath of the Second World War. Even Algeria suffered significantly from local unrest and caused severe disruption to the armed forces and political establishment of France. - J-C, Jauffret, 'The Origins of the Algerian War: The Reaction of France and its Army to the Two Emergencies of 8 May 1945 and 1 November 1954' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21 (1993) p 19

44 There are much too many federations to go into sufficient detail of all of them. One of the earliest, and perhaps one of the most relevant to the post-war scenario outside of South-East Asia, was the potential East African Dominion that would have been formed through a federation of extant territories in the region. It was particularly promising because the basis of the federation rested in wartime efforts of cooperation and coordination in the region. The difficulty here, as elsewhere in Africa, were the problems posed by racial tensions. A variety of possibilities were advanced, including several which segregated white settlers and the black population into different administrative groups within the federation, but all proved unworkable both practically and when confronted by ideological preferences from the British labour party. - N.J. Westcott, 'Closer Union and the Future of East Africa 1939-48: A Case Study in the Official Mind of Imperialism' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 10 (1982) p 75. Also it had been hoped that such federations would provide a relatively quick and easy method of ensuring a transfer of power, the inevitably of which had been accepted (though the timescale would still come as quite a shock), to a successor state that would be favourably inclined to the West and the imperial parent country. - L.J. Butler, 'Britain, the United States, and the Demise of the Central African Federation 1959-63' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28 (2000) p 147

45 A. Knight, 'Latin America' in W.R. Louis & J. Brown, *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

46 S. Newston, 'Britain, the Sterling Area, and European Integration' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 13 (1985) p 178

47 A. Sutton, *The Political Economy of Imperial Relations: Britain, the Sterling Area, and Malaya 1945-1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) p 65

48 Memorandum from the Foreign Secretary 19 October 1949 T230/177 UKNA

It is clear that while the US was keen to ensure that it could engage the USSR on ideological terms in these new states, it also sought to restrict influence from other sources as well. The US had much greater success in restricting the rise in third-party influence in new member states than it had in competing for their ideological viewpoint.[49] The hurried and harried process of decolonisation, which sought to maintain British influence through a relatively orderly transfer of power to the appropriate local people, coupled with an increasingly open market for US interests, failed to have the desired effect of shutting out Communist ideology.[50] It was in this precarious situation that Commonwealth defence cooperation endeavoured to continue.

The UK also had a more local concern of its own: Europe. There had been calls for a unified Europe from before the nineteenth century. The British position had traditionally been to avoid, and indeed actively act against, any potential union of European states in favour of ensuring a balance of power within Europe.[51] After 1945 the British stance changed dramatically. Support for the creation of a 'kind of United States of Europe' as it was put by Winston Churchill in 1946 was representative of the new thinking to be found in political circles in London.[52] British involvement in the European project can be seen at an early stage in 1948 with the UK's membership of the Western European Union. Meanwhile further political involvement would come shortly after with the creation of the Council of Europe following the Treaty of London in 1949.[53] Although it was some time before an economic or political union of any sort was established the numerous endeavours towards the creation of pan-European political bodies was representative of the growth of regional concerns and activities. The involvement of the UK, and its historic shift in European policy, was indicative of the all-encompassing revision of British foreign policy in light of the changed international context. Although Europe was not of immediate concern to the Commonwealth these countries sought – and received – assurances regarding the continuation of preferential tariffs on Commonwealth goods – especially in relation to

---

[49] At least one British government had considered their ideological opposition merely a tool with which the Russians could use to extend their own 'imperialist control'. - Prime Ministers Conference Fourth Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[50] It is interesting in this regard to note that the new member states of the Commonwealth, with the sole exception of Pakistan, were much more receptive to the USSR which, in the words of the Prime Minister of Ghana, had erred only in its 'use of force'. - Prime Minister's Conference First Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[51] E. Goldstein & B. McKercher, 'Introduction' *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 14 (2003) p 1

[52] Transcript of Winston Churchill speaking at the University of Zurich 19 September 1946

[53] Statute of the Council of Europe London 5.V.1949 – European Treaty Series No. 1/6/7/8/11

foodstuffs.[54]

It seems fair to say that all members of the Commonwealth, in the immediate post-war period, were increasingly focused on their own regional interests. Unlike other Commonwealth countries, however, the UK retained a global role due to its extensive imperial possessions. This global role continued to require British attention – and Commonwealth support – throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s. If anything, the early interest expressed by the UK, and the Commonwealth more generally, in regional structures was an early sign of the potential problems that faced pan-Commonwealth defence cooperation in the years ahead.

Successes in Commonwealth defence cooperation

Although the relatively small number of crises during the 1940s and 1950s provided limited opportunities for Commonwealth defence cooperation, several of them during the period would go on to have significant repercussions. The continuing deterioration of the situation in the Mandate of Palestine and the eventual withdrawal of the UK from the Mandate in May 1948 should also be noted.[55] Commonwealth involvement in Palestine from 1947 was complicated by the prevailing British attitude that the partition of Palestine required by the UN was unworkable.[56] Furthermore the demands the Mandate required to be met was primarily a British rather than Commonwealth affair. The decision to withdraw from the Mandate had largely been a foregone conclusion by 1947. Although there has been some debate as to whether the British had failed the Jews or the Palestinians as a result of the UN proposal,[57] it seems abundantly apparent that they had certainly further complicated their own situation – a failing by any standard. The Middle East, especially after the independence of India, remained an important element in British military thought and further involvement in Palestine was hindering, rather than helping, British activities in the region. The Mandate was a particularly British endeavour, and an altogether unsuccessful one at that.

---

54 Exchange between Mr. Diefenbaker and Mr. Thorneycroft Prime Minister's Conference Ninth meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

55 W.M. Louis, 'Sir Alan Cunningham and the End of British Rule in Palestine' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 16 (1988) p 140

56 Indeed ongoing illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine created a recipe for disaster in the region. Such immigration was extraordinarily difficult to detect and prevent, not least because of the potential for a negative reaction from the US at a critical time for the post-war British empire. - S. Cohen, 'Imperial Policing against Illegal Immigration: the Royal Navy and Palestine 1945-48' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 (1994) p 286

57 E. Ravndal, 'Exit Britain: British Withdrawal from the Palestine Mandate in the Early Cold War 1947-1948' *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23 (2010) p 416

Other crises worked out rather better, especially in the context of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The Malayan Emergency in the summer of 1948 is perhaps one of the most important for the purposes of detailing joint military endeavours across the Commonwealth during the period.[58] The Emergency provided a prime opportunity for the use of Commonwealth forces. A key British and Commonwealth interest was readily threatened and fundamentally aligned with previous British and Commonwealth military cooperation: the retention of an imperial territory from an external force.[59] There were no external pressures that prompted any particular approach or otherwise complicated matters. Although Commonwealth ground forces would not arrive until the early 1950s, air squadrons and airlift capabilities were rapidly deployed from Australia and New Zealand. Even the limited self-governing colony of Rhodesia committed a special forces squadron which had been initially earmarked for deployment in Korea. It may be a stretch to label these efforts, which were extremely limited in the context of the whole Commonwealth, as a significant multinational Commonwealth contribution to a distinctly Commonwealth problem. It does, however, highlight a key example of successful pan-Commonwealth operational cooperation continuing even in changing political conditions. Furthermore the willingness of Australia and New Zealand to allow their forces to be deployed in this manner following a request from the UK speaks more broadly to an underlying desire for, or at least acceptance of, continued cooperation. The Australian and New Zealand contribution bolstered the limited number of air transport squadrons available, transport squadrons which were key to the effort. The Rhodesian contribution, although only of 100 men filled a gap the British had in their available numbers of special forces. In the context of a conflict that involved approximately 350,000 Commonwealth forces, the presence or absence of 100 men and a handful of planes may seem inconsequential. However, their significance was in the ability of Commonwealth forces, even small ones such as the Rhodesian deployment, to fill gaps in the British order of battle. This was an important aspect to post-war Commonwealth defence cooperation that resurfaced in later years.

---

[58] It is worth considering the context of the start of the Malayan Emergency, and particularly the lack of certainty around whether it was a Communist plot as opposed to a period of enhanced local unrest caused by extant domestic issues within the territory itself. The Communist aspect, whether real or imagined, was given more attention than the evidence on which such an assertion could be based in an effort to ensure a strong British response (and as it turned out a strong Commonwealth response). - A.J. Stockwell, 'A Widespread and Long-concocted Plot to Overthrow Government in Malaya'? The Origins of the Malayan Emergency' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21 (1993) p 82

[59] Concerns that formerly British territory would fall under the influence of Communism was an ever-present fear, and one that was felt particularly keenly in South-East Asia by both the Commonwealth and the US. - Letter from the Prime Minister of the UK to the High Commissioner (Australia) to the UK re: Discussion with US Authority on Defence in South-East Asia 25 April 1955 – Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference London 1956 – Defence Brief A1209 box 446

Dawn of the New Commonwealth

The changes to Commonwealth membership did not disturb extant Commonwealth defence cooperation, and the balance between those who contributed to Commonwealth defence cooperation and those who did not was steadily tipped in favour of the latter. Whatever successes can be claimed for Commonwealth defence cooperation during the period must surely be balanced against the fact that existing Commonwealth members, and new Commonwealth members, were loath to expand their strategic interests too far away from their shores.[60] This was particularly concerning for the Commonwealth, given that it was so widely spread across the globe. Canadian involvement in Malaya, for example, was limited to materiel aid and their contribution to Korea was fraught with complications.[61] Australian and New Zealand contributions to the defence of Canada or the UK against the USSR threat were effectively non-existent. There are two key elements here. The first is that the presence or absence of other members of the Commonwealth from any specific instance of defence cooperation did not stop such instances being considered 'Commonwealth' in the context of the time. The second is that despite the limited engagement in those regions, worldwide defence and research demands presented numerous opportunities for Commonwealth defence cooperation.

The fluidity of the membership of the Commonwealth during the 1940s deserves some attention at this stage, as a key development which increased the number of Commonwealth countries which did not engage in Commonwealth defence cooperation was the increased membership of the organisation. There was some fluctuation in the membership of the Commonwealth between 1947 and 1951. The dissolution of Newfoundland and the departure of the Irish Free State from the Commonwealth reduced the number of states in the Commonwealth and introduced the possibility that the growth of the Commonwealth was not guaranteed.

The dissolution of Newfoundland had, in some ways, been some time in the offing. The dominion had ceased governing itself and had been ruled directly from London since 1934 through the

[60] Even major advances in the military capabilities of the constituent members of the Commonwealth could not be counted upon to support a broader Commonwealth effort. Even a Dominion which, according to Canadian service personnel had 'always liked the idea of the conception of Commonwealth defence', Australia, could not assure the Commonwealth that the future acquisition of two major aircraft carriers would 'leave Australia in a very early stage [to defend the Commonwealth elsewhere] if war broke out'. - Letter regarding Canadian Joint Liaison Officers to Brigadier JDB Smith, Ottawa 19 May 1949 RG 25 volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

[61] J. Grey *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean war: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 'p 34

Commission of Government. The declaration of the Republic of Ireland in April 1949 severed ties with the Commonwealth a mere ten days before the London Declaration permitted Commonwealth states to remain in the Commonwealth as republics. What evolved somewhat abruptly in 1949 was a very different Commonwealth to the one which existed before the war. Ireland became the first state to leave the Commonwealth. Newfoundland was the first state to voluntarily end its existence and reincorporate into an existing Commonwealth state. India had established a precedent that a member of the Commonwealth need not be tied to fellow states in the Commonwealth through royal titles. The political setting for the Commonwealth in the late 1940s was thus quite active and volatile. Aside from the Republic of Ireland the Commonwealth was steadfast in ensuring that former colonial states were introduced and involved in the Commonwealth as an organisation. India, for instance, remained very much involved in the Commonwealth, and participated in a variety of Commonwealth initiatives. In the late 1940s there was no prevailing idea that the Commonwealth would be effectively ignored in the post-war era. There was, however, a growing sense of a need for change. The different approaches taken by the various member states of the Commonwealth between 1947 and 1949 foreshadowed the changes to the Commonwealth that would arise throughout the 1960s. During the intervening years, and certainly between 1947 and 1950, the constituent states of the Commonwealth were very much alive to the prospect of continued Commonwealth relations, which included defence cooperation.

The independence of India and Pakistan was crucial of the changes to the structure of the Commonwealth during the 1940s. The independence of those two states directly affected the possibility of Commonwealth defence cooperation that involved more member states and highlighted the difficulties that would be encountered in subsequent expansions of the Commonwealth. The background to the independence movement and the need for partition are far too complicated to be adequately dealt with in the brief explanation and overview that can be provided here. However, for the purposes of Commonwealth defence cooperation it is necessary to recognise the implications that their independence had on the UK. The British Indian Army, numbering some 2.5 million soldiers by the end of the war, had been invaluable to the British war effort.[62] The relatively quick transfer of power to Indian and Pakistan governments has been recognised as the best of a bad situation. Specifically it was considered that if it was not possible to avoid partition of the British Raj during the decolonisation process then every effort should be made to leave with as much haste as possible to reduce British

[62] P. Barua, 'Strategies and Doctrines of Imperial Defence: Britain and India 1919-1945' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25 (1996) p 259

losses from the inevitable fallout of partition.[63] With respect to Commonwealth defence relations, the ramifications of the shift from the British Raj to the Dominion of India (and very shortly thereafter in 1949 to the Republics of India and Pakistan) cannot be underestimated. British involvement in much of the area surrounding India and Pakistan, including the Middle East and South-East Asia was largely rationalised on the desire to secure the Indian subcontinent and ensuring the safety of shipping lanes throughout the Indian Ocean.[64]

Once India became independent the involvement of the UK in those territories was of increasingly questionable value and of diminished importance to wider British strategic concerns. Although the need to secure India and safe shipping lines held true, especially for trade, the value of what was being protected and the capability of the UK to protect it had been reduced considerably.[65] Similarly the rationale for defending the Middle East and South-East Asia originally from the Ottomans and the Japanese, and now the Soviets and the Chinese respectively, was no longer clear. This did not immediately manifest itself in British military thought,[66] and it would be some time before it was recognised that widespread and radical adjustments to the UK's defence obligations were not only necessary but essential. Instead plans and preparations, such as the Middle East Defence Conference, continued to be made that ignored the implications of technological and political developments in the pursuit of a military imperative that no longer existed. With respect to Commonwealth defence cooperation this persistence had a positive effect in that it encouraged a joint Commonwealth response to the defence of the Middle East.

The dissolution of the Dominion of Newfoundland foreshadowed problems that would resurface in later decades. The dissolution process highlighted two key concerns: the first that there was a political desire to encourage the Dominions and the Commonwealth to shoulder more of the burden of

---

63 W.R. Louis, *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonisation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p 403

64 Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers from 21 to 26 June 1951 'Defence Policy and Global Strategy: The Middle East 31 July 1951 A5954 box 1799 ANA

65 Ibid. Specifically it was highlighted at the meeting that 'The UK itself cannot afford all the forces required for the Middle East in addition to those required to defend herself and Western Europe. Additional forces must therefore be found from other parts of the Commonwealth and from the US.' It was still maintained, even acknowledging this, that 'the defence of the Middle East had always been... of critical importance.'

66 It was not until 1960 that it became apparent that the UK believed that its interests, especially east of the Suez, now lay with self-governing countries. Thus less interest and consideration was made available for the maintenance of existing logistic routes – these routes themselves having already been compromised. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 LAC

their own defence; the second that the UK desired continued access to military, especially naval and air, bases. Both had implications for Commonwealth defence cooperation. The demonstration of a political desire in the UK, under Prime Minister Attlee's government, for the continued redistribution of imperial territory to other governments highlighted the uncertain nature of British presence in many parts of the world.[67] What possible argument could be made to convince other Commonwealth governments to contribute to British manpower requirements across the globe when it would appear increasingly likely that the British themselves would be withdrawing from that region in the near future? Control of Goose Bay, a British naval base in Newfoundland, was a major sticking point in negotiations between the UK and the Dominion of Canada regarding the potential transfer of Newfoundland.[68] The British government of the day was keen to see Newfoundland incorporated into Canada and equally keen to avoid the loss of access to Goose Bay in that reincorporation. The situation in Newfoundland was resolved following a Canadian government threat that future war aid to the UK would not be forthcoming should a 99 year lease of the airbase at Goose Bay not be included in the particulars of the arrangement. In the event the Canadians got their lease, and the UK received war aid and a loan at a generous interest rate of two per cent.[69]

This Anglo-Canadian dispute was representative of other, similar, issues that resurfaced in later decades. British governments were conscious of the increased political sensitivities in respect of basing rights in foreign countries and constantly sought out alternatives and/or attempted to maintain existing facilities for as long as possible.[70] This sort of issue arose often during negotiations in decolonisation processes. Local, often Commonwealth, desires to further their own regional agenda came at a price. That price was a reduction in the certainty of British military operations around the world. As the UK largely held Commonwealth defence cooperation together this uncertainty had the effect of undermining Commonwealth defence cooperation more generally. Although the issue at Goose Bay is a small one, it was indicative of future issues and a clear warning sign of things to come.

---

67 Cabinet Conclusions 83rd Meeting 7 December 1954 CAB 128/27 UKNA

68 G. Malone, *Don't Tell the Newfoundlanders* (Toronto: Alfred Knopf, 2012) p 14 The document cited by Malone talks about the importance of Newfoundland as an 'important bargaining chip' in its role as a part of the operation of 'trans-Atlantic services'. This is explained to include the air facilities in Newfoundland, including Goose Bay.

69 G. Malone, *Don't Tell the Newfoundlanders* p 73

70 Even in South-East Asia concerns as to the viability of British bases were apparent at an early stage. Alternatives to the bases in Singapore and Malaysia – the political security of which was not assured – were explored in the form of North Borneo (considered quite possible), Thailand and the Philippines (both unlikely), and Australia (which had the added benefit of encouraging more active Australian involvement in the defence of the region as a whole). - 'The Prospects of Retaining our present Bases in South-East Asia' 5 January 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA

Meanwhile Ireland declared itself a Republic in late 1949. A secession from the links with the British Empire and the Commonwealth which had largely already been achieved over the course of the preceding two decades was announced on the eve of a change which would have allowed a Republic in the Commonwealth. Naval bases across Ireland had been an issue in the first half of the twentieth century but had long since been put to rest.[71] Ireland typified a common reaction to Commonwealth military activities that would become dominant amongst the member states of the Commonwealth from the 1950s onwards. In short, they refused or withdrew themselves from involvement in such operations. Although Ireland's relationship with the UK was particularly troubled it was hardly unique in that respect.[72] Much can be learned about the British relationship to the Commonwealth from Ireland's withdrawal in 1949. The possibility of the Irish government revoking the remaining elements of the External Relations Act, which had been the basis for continuing links between Ireland and the UK, had been the subject of much speculation domestically. When it was announced that the External Relations Act would be revoked, and Ireland would withdraw from the Commonwealth, the British reaction was resoundingly negative.[73] The fear that India might follow Ireland or insist on some sort of associate membership with the Commonwealth which could threaten British influence and prestige was foremost in the minds of the British government. Plans to appeal directly to the Irish population, rather than to the parliament in Dublin, to prevent a withdrawal from the Commonwealth were considered but ultimately dropped.[74] The episode marks ongoing fears that the Commonwealth might not succeed in providing support for the British position on the world stage. However, it highlighted the resilience and attractiveness of the Commonwealth in that neither India nor Pakistan followed in Ireland's footsteps as the governments in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand all feared.

In fact, between 1947 and 1951 the overall progress of ensuring that Commonwealth cooperation continued despite changes to the Commonwealth would seem to have been quite successful. The majority of pre-1947 members of the Commonwealth – Canada, Australia, New

---

71 British-Irish tripartite agreement on Trade, Finance, and Defence (P. No. 3104) London 25 April 1938

72 See K. Kenny, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); S. Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); as well as more recent work by R. Toye,. 'Phrases make History here: Churchill, Ireland, and the rhetoric of empire' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 38 (2010) pp 549-570

73 F.J. McEvoy, 'Canada, Ireland, and the Commonwealth: The Declaration of the Irish Republic 1948-49' *Irish Historical Studies* 24 (1985) p 506

74 I. McCabe, *The Formulation and Consequences of the Republic of Ireland Act 1948-49* (unpublished PhD thesis at the London School of Economics, 1990) p 249

Zealand, South Africa, and Newfoundland – remained interested and involved in Commonwealth affairs. Issues which caused problems over the coming decades such as peacekeeping initiatives, local defence concerns, and domestic troubles had not yet surfaced. Disagreements regarding the Sterling area and the Sterling balances were ever present.[75] These did not become a problem until the mid-1950s when India drew down on its Sterling balances at a rapid rate.[76] The Dominion of Newfoundland had decided to incorporate into a larger state within the Commonwealth. Two new member states, India and Pakistan, attained Commonwealth membership in spite of fears that the entire thing might come apart at the seams. It was far from an unblemished success story, but hardly a failure either. In 1950 it was not unreasonable to look at the state of the Commonwealth and be optimistic about its future.

Inter-Commonwealth relations between 1947 and 1951 revealed serious historical and cultural issues that pointed to future problems that undermined future Commonwealth relations. Although the issue of Irish naval bases had long since been resolved, Northern Ireland remained a point of contention. In parliamentary debates in 1949 the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sean MacBride, cited the partition of the island of Ireland as an impediment to Irish involvement in the 'proposed Atlantic pact' (NATO).[77] Pakistan was in a similar position. It declined further involvement in Commonwealth military endeavours, including deployments to the Middle East and Korea. Pakistan cited a 'hostile neighbour', India, as the primary impediment to their involvement.[78] The difficulties of decolonisation presented problems that made engaging in defence cooperation with other members of the Commonwealth a non-trivial affair. This was a problem that had been recognised and highlighted even during the Second World War within the Colonial Office and had prompted a reconsideration of the role and purpose of the Colonial Office.[79]

Further to the role of the Colonial Office in the post-war period it had become clear that pre-war

---

[75] D. Lee, 'Australian, the British Commonwealth, and the US 1950-53' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (2008) p 462

[76] The Pakistan government protested quite sharply at a Commonwealth meeting that if India was free to draw on its Sterling balances so rapidly then Pakistan might well do the same, and cause further economic problems for the entire Sterling area. - Prime Minister's Conference Eighth Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[77] Dail Eireann Debates Volume 114 No. 12 'Ceisteanna: Oral Answers – The North Atlantic Treaty' Tuesday 29 March 1949

[78] M. Ali, *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p 365

[79] J.M. Lee, 'Forward thinking' and war: The Colonial Office during the 1940s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 6 (1977) p 77

timetables for the retention of colonial holdings were no longer valid, and that the new political climate on this issue was recognised by all of the major political parties in the UK.[80] Immediate post-war studies of colonial territory divided the British Empire up into tiers of potentially independent states that might emerge from the dissolution, with timelines that had estimates revised down from the twenty-first century to the end of the twentieth century in the case of certain African territories, and by 1950 would suggest a date as early as 1970.[81] Some, like India, consisted of substantial territory and were generally viable states. Others, like Malaysia, would need to be a combination of culturally and ethnically distinct entities in order to become economically viable.[82] The remaining territories were not envisaged to be ready for independence for the foreseeable future. This included much of Africa in addition to less populated British territory like the Falklands.[83]

A review of imperial possessions had profound implications for contemporary studies and for defence policy in how it affected planning for future defence requirements. One of the key elements of these defence-related reviews of the remaining elements of the British Empire was that it would be possible for Africa to take on the role that the British Raj had played in the British empire for the past two centuries.[84] The level of development of the region was recognised as a complicating factor and plans for new naval and air bases along the east coast of Africa would have required a massive investment in infrastructure. Given its weak economic situation this was not a demand that could realistically be met by the UK.[85] Nevertheless, military efforts in attempting to ensure the continuation

---

80 Although there was a limit as to how far this could be pushed amongst the Conservative party, in general terms there was an acceptance that concessions, at least, would have to be made and in many places even wide scale withdrawal would be necessary. - D. Goldsworthy, 'Conservatives and Decolonisation: A Note on the Interpretation by Dan Horowitz' *African Affairs* 69 (1970) p 278

81 W.R. Louis, & R. Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonisation' in J. D. le Sueur (ed), *The Decolonisation Reader* (London: Routledge, 2003) p 49

82 The ethnic mix of Malaysia would pose significant problems for its development throughout the period, even after Singapore was made an independent state. It was reported in 1971 that there had been a 'polarization of the races but strains have developed in the Malay community as a result of differences of opinion as to how the special position of the Malays should be safeguarded.' Although it was not expected to take on a similar character as apartheid in South Africa, it was considered that even a multiracial representation in government would only work if it had a strong pro-Malay bias and an emphasis on the protection of Malay rights. That a country as comparably successful and stable as Malaysia suffered from such ongoing internal tensions speaks volumes as to the difficulty of the decolonisation process. - Review of Defence Cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore JS Report no. 56/59 A1838 Item 696/1/13 ANA

83 F. Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation 1945-63* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002) p 101

84 D. McIntyre, *Winding up the British Empire in the Pacific Islands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) p 31

85 Indeed that sort of capital expenditure was well and truly fanciful given that British bases were being scaled down in response to budget cuts throughout the 1950s. Ceylon and Gibraltar were to be reduced to a 'storage base and communication centre'. Hong Kong was to 'close altogether'. Singapore and Malta were to see reductions of 'every kind [of facility] to the minimum required for a small detachment of ships'. - Memorandum by the Admiralty points 25 and 26 AIR 19 Defence Expenditure – 1956 UKNA

of British involvement in the Indian Ocean continued quite actively even after the loss of India and remained an integral element of British strategic planning.

New military technology and strategy

This military planning acknowledged the consequences of new technological developments in the field. The potential use of nuclear weapons against key military installations prompted the dispersion of military assets and bases. The era of significant bodies of manpower being deployed in a very concentrated area, such as at the Suez, was over.[86] The dominance of military base planning on a dispersed pattern had well and truly taken hold.[87] Although nuclear weapons had yet to see widespread deployment remaining British and Commonwealth base planning was cognizant of the changes that these new weapons would have on the strategic landscape in the following decades.

Outside of this long-term planning there was little impetus to address the issue in anything but a theoretical context until the USSR developed a working nuclear weapon in August 1949. Even with the advent of a Soviet nuclear weapon the practical implications of nuclear weapons on the battlefield were gradual at least until Soviet nuclear weapons, particularly tactical nuclear weapons, became more widely available to Soviet forces during the 1950s and 1960s.[88] The delay in the development and deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons provided for the continued existence of a traditional approach to Commonwealth military cooperation in spite of major technological change. The wars of the last fifty years had been fought on the basis that forces based beyond the immediate combat theatre could, given time, be redeployed. Australian and New Zealand troops had fought half a world away in Europe during the Second World War, while troops from India fought throughout the Middle East and Asia. British navy vessels and aircraft operated throughout the world. All of these were hallmarks of the type

[86] There were approximately eighty thousand British troops at the Suez canal. Efforts in the early 1950s to reduce that through a phased withdrawal that would leave only seven thousand troops were objected to by General Neguib. - Minutes of 3rd Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 5 June 1953 MG26L Volume 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) LAC. Also see M. Mason, 'The Decisive Volley: the Battle of Ismailia and the Decline of British Influence in Egypt January-July 1952' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19 (1991) p 45

[87] In particular see a comment by General Lyman Lamnitzer, the representative by the US Joints Chiefs of Staff '...at the divisional level in the American Army, plans for both the dispersal and concentration [of its forces] were now sufficiently advanced.' Although he would go on to note that this was not always a possibility for the logistical side of operations due to the 'need for economical deployment in peacetime'. Record of Meeting between H. Watkinson, and R. McNamara, 1 May 1962 DEFE7 UKNA

[88] By 1962 the British government believed that there were 'thousands of these weapons [tactical nuclear weapons], and their total capacity amounts to scores of megatons' in Europe. So many, in fact, that 'if they were used in action, the scale of destruction would be comparable to that from a strategic strike. The idea that the Armies in Europe could fight a tactical battle with nuclear weapons of this destructive power seems to me to be wholly unrealistic.' - Telegram no. T384/62 from the Prime Minister to President Kennedy January 1962 PREM11 PMUK991/3 UKNA

of global spread of cooperation and coordination that existed before the advent of nuclear weapons. This style of cooperation was also, notably, amenable to the geographic situation of the British Empire and the Commonwealth. The joint defence of the Commonwealth from multiple members of the Commonwealth only functioned in a context where deployments from two oceans away could arrive in time to make a difference.

Between 1947 and 1950 this remained possible only on account of the limited numbers of nuclear weapons deployed, although arguably the practicalities involved made even the deployment of nuclear weapons sufficient to threaten London enough to render such strategies ineffective. In time the variety and availability of nuclear weapons was expanded, by both the US and the USSR, in such a way that eventually resulted in the possibility of a massive destructive capability in the hands of even a small force. That change offered the opportunity for a conflict in any particular territory to be resolved far more quickly than troops could arrive from across any significant distance.[89] So although the speed with which armed forces were capable of reinforcing their lines remained largely unchanged, the speed of destruction was significantly improved. What use would Australian or Canadian reinforcements to the Middle East be to the UK several months into a conflict when a barrage of nuclear weapons would settle the conflict in Europe within a few weeks? For Commonwealth military cooperation, this would not become a practical reality worthy of consideration until the mid-1950s. In the interim strategic doctrine remained steadfastly rooted in the concepts of the previous fifty years. The recognition of the eventual need for a switch in perspectives to account for the new technology had not yet translated into any positive action.

Although the strategic concepts that were implemented had not yet changed, there were ongoing developments in military theory. Some of this theory explored how existing military strategy could adapt with few changes to the new technology. One such theory was the concept of 'Broken Backed Warfare'. This theory explored the potential capabilities and usefulness of conventional military forces continuing a conflict following a nuclear exchange. Significant importance was attached to the capability and importance of the navy in any such situation – particularly in the realm of maintaining communications. Broken Backed Warfare was advanced in the 1952 Global Strategy Paper in the UK

[89] The potential for this had been noted in Cabinet minutes in late 1957 and formed the basis of the proposed nuclear-based British military force which would see extraordinarily limited forward deployment. - Cabinet Conclusions 2nd August 1957 CAB 131/18 D(57)7 UKNA

and demonstrated the known problems and issues involved in the sort of long-range redeployments that had been common to Commonwealth and Imperial strategy in the event of a widespread nuclear war.[90] It was rejected as a viable approach by both the US and the USSR by the mid-1950s, and Commonwealth cooperation had also drifted away from such thinking by this time.[91] Nevertheless, it was an active attempt to adapt the existing Commonwealth defence cooperation approach into the new paradigm and was indicative of a form of military cooperation that was very much alive and responsive to developments – even if it could not provide any solutions to those developments.

The United Nations, decolonisation, and inter-Commonwealth relations

The creation of a new international body, the United Nations, with its own goals and agenda also needs to be considered in the post-war political developments that affected potential military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. The UN played a small but vital role in shaping the direction of Commonwealth defence cooperation, and members of the Commonwealth contributed forces to its operations. Although the vast majority of UN operations were undertaken after the Cold War, the operations it undertook during the Cold War were often in response to a problematic decolonisation and/or nationalisation process that was not amicably resolved. There were few calls for the UN to act in the final years of the 1940s. A UN force which deployed for the defence of the Free City of Trieste was drawn entirely from existing American and British forces, with the notable exception of a section of territory that was to be administered by Yugoslavia.[92] There were two, more relevant, active monitoring missions undertaken. The first to the Mandate of Palestine, from which the British subsequently withdrew to allow for the creation of a Jewish state. The second to the disputed border between Pakistan and India. The UN force deployed to Pakistan would be one of the longest operations by the UN, as the difficulties along the disputed Pakistan/Indian border continued.[93] Both deployments were

[90] This would be temporarily built upon in the 1954 White Paper which would subsequently claim that 'a period of broken-backed warfare would follow'. Cmnd 9075 Statement on Defence 1954 UKNA

[91] It had, of course, never been fully accepted by the Commonwealth – or even the United Kingdom – either. The possibility of offensive action with modern forces in that situation on any manageable scale or to any reasonable purpose was simply unlikely. Although the 1952 Paper did make a concession that this sort of engagement was more likely on sea than on land or in the air. It has been argued, however, that this was merely a concession to placate the the First Sea Lord and ensure his agreement to the rest of the paper. - J. Baylis and A. Macmillan, 'The British Global Strategy Paper of 1952' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 16 (1993) p 212

[92] UN – Treaty Series Volume 235 No. 3297 Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Italy, the UK, the US of American, and Yugoslavia regarding the Free Territory of Trieste. - London 5 October 1954

[93] Authorization for the first deployment of a UN sanctioned force (if only of five men) to Kashmir came in 1948. Only the Truce Supervision Organisation to monitor the Arab-Israeli ceasefire was formed around that time. - Security Council Resolution 47 21 April 1948 S/RES/726 formed the UN force in Kashmir. While the Arab-Israeli supervision organisation was called into being with General Assembly Resolution 186 (S-2) on 14 May 1948.

multinational efforts. US and Belgian observers were deployed to Palestine initially, while the observer mission to the Pakistani-Indian border had contributions from around the globe, although it was consistently too under-strength to realistically carry out its declared purpose. Joint military endeavours relating to issues of decolonisation and the withdrawal of imperial powers were becoming increasingly common and regularly falling under the aegis of the UN.[94] In the absence of inter-Commonwealth issues this could easily have proven a significant path forward for Commonwealth military operations in the post-war period. However, the deep-seated conflict based on religion and territory in Pakistan and India, in what amounted to a repeat of the issues that plagued the evolution of the Irish Free State, prevented that possibility. The token effort from the UN demonstrated a willingness of the new international political scene to engage on these issues, but even this tacitly accepted that no resolution was likely to be found, and the effort expended was correspondingly weak. The small numbers deployed by the UN were such that it is debatable as to how successful the deployment to the region could be even in terms of merely monitoring the conflict along the border.

Further complications in Commonwealth relations stemmed from the traditional reluctance to comment on the internal affairs of other Commonwealth countries. There was a principle of engagement in the Commonwealth which discouraged involvement in and comment on the internal affairs of other Commonwealth countries. There were certainly historical issues at work in how that approach became the default, but it was also reflective of an institutional inertia that permeated the political structure of the Commonwealth. It was not an inertia which lasted long in the face of an expanding Commonwealth. It does, however, serve as an important reminder of the very different nature of the Commonwealth organisation in the immediate post-war period. Whereas in 1947 the focus was on the external defence of the Commonwealth from external threats with a broad latitude allowed for different internal policies, as the Commonwealth grew more focus was placed on the internal policies of Commonwealth countries, and less focus on contributing to the external defence of those countries.

It is important to recognise that the difficulties of a number of constituent states within the

[94] This was, in fact, often on the foot of the UN General Assembly seeking to pass comment on those countries which continued to possess colonial territory. This was a point of discussion for the Commonwealth more generally, with an appropriately varied response ranging from such calls being 'unrealistic and irresponsible' to the declaration that the UN offered small nations the 'right to free expression' in a way that had previously been significantly more difficult for them to acquire. - Prime Minister's Conference: Seventh Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 File 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

Commonwealth did not reflect the broader picture. Cross-Commonwealth cooperation was still strong, and did not always involve Commonwealth forces slotting into British strategy and force structures. British deployments were often adjusted to account for a particular lack of skills or equipment in Commonwealth countries. For example, from 1948 onwards both Australia and Canada benefited from the deployment of a British Royal Navy submarine squadron that remained in place until the late 1960s. In Australia the 4th Submarine Squadron was supplemented by a depot ship, HMS Adamant.[95] Although a Royal Navy submarine squadron was not stationed in Canada (specifically Nova Scotia) until 1955, the Royal Canadian Navy had taken the option of leasing British submarines from the late 1940s. Both the Royal Navy detachment and the leased submarines to the Royal Canadian Navy had been made available by removing them from deployments elsewhere. The 4th squadron had come from Trincomalee in Ceylon, and the submarines leased to Canada for training purposes were redeployed from the Far East.[96] This was a recurring feature of Commonwealth defence cooperation over the coming decades. Much Commonwealth cooperation undertaken was based on one, or multiple, Commonwealth states providing a specialist deployment which might be in use elsewhere. This sort of technical exchange on military hardware, training, and specialisation, was at the heart of what Commonwealth cooperation could easily provide.[97] Training bases in Canada, rocket research and testing facilities in Australia, inter-Commonwealth cooperation on nuclear development amongst other forms and instances of engagement was demonstrative of the ongoing exchange of specialisations amongst the Commonwealth countries as a continued feature of Commonwealth military cooperation throughout the Cold War.

Conclusion

The period between 1947 and 1951 was a relatively stable time in Commonwealth affairs. Although significant changes were afoot in the organisation, there was little cause for immediate concern. The first indication of a potential shift to the structure and organisation of the Commonwealth

[95] A. Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006) p 304

[96] M. Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) p 206

[97] There are numerous examples of this level of cooperation on a technical and service-level that continued after the Second World War. One such example of cooperation was the standing invitation for Commonwealth (and after 1945 the US) countries to send students to the Imperial Defence College. This had initially designed as a means of 'preparing senior and carefully chosen officers... for high commands and appointments'. Additionally the College sent staff and students on overseas tour of participating countries. Although it may not have been explicit it seems clear that there was an attempt to foster a network of contacts amongst the highest echelons of the Commonwealth armed forces. It is interesting to note that the College intended on performing one such tour to South Africa in the summer of 1962, by which time South Africa was not even in the Commonwealth. - Annex to Letter from Commandant-General Hieul to Minister of Defence 5 July 1962 MV 201/149 Besoeke Aan Die Republiek Deur Persone van Buite SANDFA

of a more permanent nature during these four years had its roots in the independence of the British Raj and its partition between India and Pakistan. It was a subtle start to the major changes that struck at the very heart of the substance of Commonwealth military cooperation. The relatively minor adjustments to the Commonwealth formula during this period foreshadowed the end of Commonwealth cooperation as it had previously been understood.

The partition of the Indian subcontinent, and its subsequent division between India and Pakistan was reminiscent of the earlier partition of Ireland. It had eerily similar circumstances and unfortunately similar results: the refusal of a Commonwealth member to participate in military endeavours on a joint basis. Ireland's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1949 was more unusual and a relatively minor blip in what was an otherwise positive development of the Commonwealth. The rapid enlargement of the Commonwealth which followed in the 1950s and 1960 brought with it a correspondingly large number of diverse issues that built upon existing problems. Furthermore, the international political scene was not interested in the complications arising from the widespread encouragement of the decolonisation process. The creation of new independent states consisting of vast territory under the rule of one particular people or another, whether the infrastructural, regional, or international political support for such change was in place or not, resulted in serious problems. Those problems affected both the new states themselves and the prospect of the continuation of the cohesion of the existing Commonwealth. Even where such a transition was based on relatively stable background of political development, as in Ireland, this was no indicator of success – insofar as the continuation of the pre-existing military Commonwealth relationship would be concerned.

The situation across the Commonwealth was increasingly dominated by local and regional concerns.[98] Senior members of the Commonwealth, specifically Canada and Australia, had their own agenda and goals that did not necessarily favour joint endeavours with other Commonwealth countries.[99] Canadian policy-makers were extremely reluctant to involve themselves outside the North

[98] For Australia and New Zealand this was, in part, a reflection of the fact that they were not only exposed in relation to the distance between them and the US and the UK, but also on account of the fact that their 'relatively small population... can never hope to match the armed forces of populous countries such as Indonesia.' - Minute for Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 'Australia's New Three-Year Defence Programme' 9 November 1962 MV103/1 Australiese-Aangeleenthede SANDFA

[99] This was also true of economic matters, and indeed much more effort has been involved in analysing the cooperation in this regard than it has on military aspects. - F. McKenzie, 'Renegotiating a Special Relationship: The Commonwealth and Anglo-American Economic Discussions September-December 1945' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26 (1998) p 90

Atlantic and at any rate focused on cooperation with the US rather than with the Commonwealth. Australian participation outside South-East Asia continued in the Middle East until the mid-1950s but there was a rising interest in the defence of their own borders. Australia's interests eventually withdrew into a localised, regionally-based, defensive attitude that had little room for the type of global effort that had been demonstrated in the first half of the twentieth century. New Zealand's foreign and defence policy, given its geographic location and particular circumstances, was fundamentally tied to following Australia's lead in such matters. Domestic issues in South Africa necessitated an internal focus with clear implications for the prospect of South African involvement in cooperative endeavours with the Commonwealth.

It was these changes in the Commonwealth that fundamentally altered how Commonwealth defence cooperation directly manifested in later years. The UK had considered that the Commonwealth could serve as a vehicle for the preservation of post-war British influence. It was a useful tool for British policy-makers to retain, if not for the preservation of the empire then at least to preserve a modicum of the influence that had accompanied it. Unfortunately for British politicians the Commonwealth could not be used for that purpose without simultaneously admitting that there had been a significant reduction in the influence of the UK itself. This admission that the UK's influence over its old empire (now the new Commonwealth) had declined would have served to highlight that the UK could not count on these new Commonwealth states as had been widely believed by both the US and the USSR. The introduction of new states accompanied by a shift in how the Commonwealth conducted its affairs thus could not be stopped by British influence. This was so even where the expanded Commonwealth sought to introduce systems that were entirely contrary to its previously-held concepts and principles. The preservation of British influence was, paradoxically, dependent on that influence not being used directly. This was the same issue that plagued the other bastion of British influence in the modern era: nuclear weapons.[100] Their capacity to influence is dependent on their non-use. Both the Commonwealth and nuclear weapons were recognised as providing limited influence to Anglo-American relations, where it was most needed.[101]

---

[100] Cabinet Conclusions D(58)33 17th July 1958 CAB 131/20 UKNA

[101] Minutes of 3rd Meeting BND(56)61, 18th December 1961Air 19/998. This was the Australian view of strategic nuclear weapons as well: they were there, on the basis that they were not used in the field, but to ensure that politically their position was strengthened. - C. Leah & R. Lyon, 'Australian thinking about Nuclear Weapons and Strategy,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* 64 (2010) p 453

This effectively paralysed any response to the changes prompted by the changing membership of the Commonwealth. British governments, conscious of the need to ensure their influence through the Commonwealth refrained from asking too much of the Commonwealth. More importantly the British government refrained from challenging the Commonwealth on substantive matters of policy which radically departed from the Commonwealth's established norms. This refusal to engage or prevent change to the Commonwealth structure in the pursuit of influence culminated in the change to Commonwealth defence cooperation that is seen after 1971. However, in 1947 the extent of this problem was not yet fully felt and indeed some clear successes could be seen during the waning years of the 1940s. Furthermore, the immediate need to secure the Middle East still provided some level of involvement amongst the Commonwealth on a broad basis. Yet the warning signs even on this beacon of positive engagement are clear given the absence of Canada.[102] The absence of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon should also be noted.[103] Canada's position is more curious than the others, especially in light of the Canadian Chief of General Staff's view that even if Canadian interests were not immediately present in the Middle East it would be beneficial to attend regardless.[104]

Effectively the retention of British influence in the Commonwealth, on the basis that it was not, or could not, be used in anything other than circumstances in line with the individual desires of the particular Commonwealth country had the effect of diminishing the prospects of cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. This reinforced the view that contemporary military thought favoured a more local focus, and only advanced to other theatres when there was a belief that adequate forces had been

[102] However, it should be noted that the Canadians did receive copies of the outcome of the Conference, and were present at discussions in 'an observer capacity'. - Brief for Canadian delegation 'Commonwealth Defence Conference of Middle East' CSC 5-2-3 21 May 1951 RG 25 Volume 5963 File 50227 50 Part I. The specific reason Canada gave for non-attendance was that the Canadian government did not consider the Middle East to be central to its interests. This is in spite of the fact that the proposed agenda for the Conference was actually rather more wide-ranging than the Middle East itself. It included a general review of global strategy, a discussion on the ANZAM area, and a variety of related topics relating to improving liaison arrangements between the UK and other members of the Commonwealth, and the interchange of personnel amongst training facilities for standardization purposes. - Memorandum for Mr. Robertson Annex to Proposed Commonwealth Defence Conference 'Proposed Agenda for Commonwealth Defence Ministers' 20 February 1951 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

[103] The absence of the Asian dominions can be attributed to a mixture of their broader political views and their immediate local concerns. Specifically past Indian comments regarding their desire to 'retain independence of action in the event of war', and later clarified by Mr. Nehru that India held an 'essentially neutral position between East and West'. Meanwhile Mr. Ali of Pakistan made it clear that 'he could not take part in any defence discussions... until the Kashmir question was settled.' Memorandum for Mr. Wershof – Defence Liaison Division 21 May 1951 RG 25 Volume 5963 File 50227 50 Part I LAC

[104] He was of the view that it would be beneficial to '[learn] all [that] we can everywhere providing it implies no commitment to send forces.' This was on the basis that 'if anyone had suggested Canadian Army Officers should study operational conditions in Sicily or Italy [prior to 1936] they would have been laughed to scorn.' - Letter to Secretary Chiefs of Staff from Chief of General Staff 17 April 1951 Appendix A to CDS 5-2-3 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

allocated for their defence.[105] Clearly what the successful growth of Commonwealth strategic cooperation required was growing global interest from Commonwealth countries other than the UK. That did not emerge.

At the turn of the 1950s, however, the situation could have been significantly worse. While certainly the process of decolonisation was troublesome, ongoing cooperative Commonwealth efforts, while reduced in comparison to the Second World War were still very much present.[106] Even between 1947 and 1951, which had very few noteworthy instances of Commonwealth defence cooperation, there was an emphasis on the supply and exchange of personnel, specialised equipment, and other materiel. The Australian-command British Commonwealth Occupation Force Japan pointed to extant Commonwealth defence cooperation structures, structures that were used a few years later to form the basis for British Commonwealth Forces Korea, and from there the 1st Commonwealth Division. The Middle East loomed large in post-war British strategic planning, and the Middle East Defence Conference marked one of the last endeavours of Commonwealth military cooperation that would involve multiple Commonwealth countries in what might be described as a global, rather than regional, defence cooperation.[107]

This chapter has outlined the military and political circumstances and objectives of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK from 1947 until 1951. It has also noted the successes, and failures, of Commonwealth defence cooperation during the period, and pointed out the reaction to

[105] The Canadian representative in London considered that this was the position held by the Australians and New Zealanders even prior to the Middle East Defence Conference. Specifically to the effect that '[their] commitments to this vital area will naturally depend upon their being satisfied that adequate forces will be available to defend the Pacific.' - Telegram no. 1239 from High Commission for Canada, London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 21 May 1951 RG 25 Volume 5963 File 50227 50 Part I LAC

[106] See Report no. 75 'Military Cooperation within the Commonwealth 1939-1945' 20 November 1956 RG 24 Volume 6927 LAC for more detail on cooperation in the Second World War. Note, however, that Commonwealth defence cooperation was conducted during the Second World War through a mixture of ad-hoc arrangements and legislation. Each Dominion implemented their own version of legislation, most of it based around a combination of the British 'Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act 1933, and the South African 'Defence Act (Amendment) and Dominion Forces Act 1932' (alternatively described as Act No. 32 of 1932). However, Australian and New Zealand legislation on this matter differed slightly in that it 'restricted the penalty that could be imposed upon a member of these forces, to the penalty that could be made by the law of either country for a similar offence. - Report no. 72 'Canadian Participation in the Korean War Part II: 1 April 1952-31 July 1953 RG 24 Volume 6927 LAC

[107] Indeed there had been a suggestion for the permanent establishment of a joint Commonwealth force in the region since the early 1950s. These were acknowledged solely a potential token force, more to gain experience 'in an area where operations would certainly be conducted in war' and as a means of galvanizing local opinion, as it was believed the deployment of forces to South-East Asia had done. - Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers 21 to 26 June 1951 'Token Forces for the Middle East in Peacetime' 31 July 1951 A5954 box 1799 ANA

changes in military technology. It has argued that the relative stability of joint Commonwealth defence cooperation in the period demonstrated that the Commonwealth was handling new issues as they arose and sought ways to involve new Commonwealth countries in joint military activity. Furthermore, it has pointed to some of the early warning signs that the long-term continuation of Commonwealth defence cooperation was not guaranteed while noting that these had not yet had time to fully mature into serious implications. This suggests that this period was the calm before the storm and argues that the next period in Commonwealth defence cooperation, between 1951 and 1960, saw further changes to Commonwealth defence cooperation that started a long process of transformation.

Chapter two: The Commonwealth reacts to the global situation, 1951 to 1960

Introduction

This chapter explores the successes and challenges to Commonwealth defence cooperation between 1951 to 1960. It points to the continued relative success of Commonwealth defence cooperation. It notes the changing structure of the Commonwealth and the growth in external pressures that undermined existing Commonwealth defence cooperation. Finally it examines how British strategic doctrine shifted as a result of these, and other, changes which contributed to the reduced prospects for continued joint Commonwealth operations by 1960. In this respect it ties into the thesis's overall argument by indicating some of the key underlying causes that hindered Commonwealth defence cooperation. In doing so it effectively marked the beginning of a long process of transition in defence relations amongst Commonwealth countries. Furthermore, it points to the groundwork established during the period for a continuation of pre-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation after 1971 amongst a select subset of the Commonwealth. This argument is explored in the chapter by examining the Commonwealth's contribution to the Korean War, as well as the particulars of their involvement with the 1st Commonwealth Division. It explores the rapidly changing military context which favoured the development of regional defence organisations when considering joint operations, as well as the implications of changes in British strategic doctrine for Commonwealth defence cooperation more generally. Finally it concludes by highlighting the threat the expansion of the Commonwealth posed to the status quo.

In 1950 the Middle East Defence Conference established the groundwork for the development of Commonwealth military relations during the first half of the 1950s.[1] The Conference ensured a continuation of coordination amongst the Commonwealth countries after the Second World War through the establishment of an agreed strategic plan for the defence of the British Empire and the Commonwealth.[2] The mentality that dominated in the Middle East Defence Conference reflected the few changes in military thought since 1945 and that a global strategy, not dissimilar from that which had been employed by the British Empire and across the Commonwealth over the course of the

1 Telegram no. 1296 from High Commission for Canada in London to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 26 May 1951. RG 25 Vol. 5903 File 50227-40 Part 1 LAC

2 Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers, London, 21 to 26 June 1951 A5954 box 1799 ANA

preceding fifty years, remained perfectly viable.[3] Minor adjustments of content and phrasing to the document paid lip service to the growing interest in a regionally-based defensive posture but it remained fundamentally attached to the unified defence of specific regions through a traditional, global, approach to defence questions.[4] When viewed together with the creation of the 1st Commonwealth Division during the Korean War, the early 1950s can be seen as a particularly strong period of overt pan-Commonwealth defence cooperation.

The 1st Commonwealth Division established in mid-1951 for deployment in the Korean War may, perhaps, be the only unqualified success of Commonwealth defence cooperation after 1947. The creation of the Division was considered by many senior politicians, especially those who were known to favour enhanced cooperation amongst the Commonwealth, as one of the earliest tests of the Commonwealth relationship since the Second World War.[5] The Division was a multinational formation consisting of soldiers from every Dominion of the Commonwealth, with the exception of South Africa and Pakistan. Notably it even included a detachment from the recently formed Republic of India. In many ways the 1st Division represents the epitome of Commonwealth defence cooperation. Although the hesitation in commitment, the economic issues involved, and the absence of certain members of the Commonwealth did not bode well for the future, it nonetheless demonstrated the capability of the Commonwealth to create joint military formations even as the Commonwealth itself was changing.

Although less iconic of Commonwealth defence cooperation, the development of regional defence arrangements had increasingly been heralded as a key element of overall Commonwealth strategy in the Middle East Defence Conference. This was certainly a response to a series of events happening concurrently throughout the world in response to global pressures and the geopolitical situation, and not a forward-thinking step by policy-makers across the Commonwealth. That should not detract from the fact that the Commonwealth of 1951 remained a very adaptable organisation. The shift

---

3 For example New Zealand pledging an infantry division and five air force squadrons to arrive in the Middle East some three months after a request had been received. - McKenzie, F. 'In the National Interest: Dominions' Support for Britain and the Commonwealth after the Second World War' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Volume 34 Issue 4 p 567

4 Although the Middle East Defence Conference ultimately recognised the necessity of regional arrangements, the path pursued in practice at this point in the early 1950s, was such that these regional arrangements were organized on a global basis. The defence of the Middle East, for instance, was planned for with the deployment of Australian and New Zealand troops, and until rejected by Canada, had intended to integrate them as well.

5 Cabinet report on Australian participation in Cold War Operations in Korea December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954 File 1682-2 ANA

to regional defence arrangements on a national and global level was, as outlined in the previous chapter, mirrored in the Middle East Defence Conference which emphasised the importance of regional defence structures as a means through which US support could be attracted.[6] These arrangements met with mixed success over the course of the decade. Some failed miserably following a period of fits and starts such as the Middle East Treaty Organisation which formally disbanded by 1979 having attracted little support. It had been difficult to maintain interest amongst key participants of the Middle East Treaty Organisation, and was more generally troublesome to its signatories.[7] Despite a clear Commonwealth commitment and interest in the region little local support was found amongst the Commonwealth. In the absence of a strong Commonwealth presence in the Middle East it is little wonder that it failed to develop in the expected fashion. These failures were specific to its particular circumstances. A similar regionally-based organisation was developed in South-East Asia which had much greater success. The South-East Asian Treaty Organisation, SEATO, ultimately formed a key structure for the defence of the region.[8] Parallel to the development of SEATO was the start of one of the long-running success stories of Commonwealth defence cooperation: the interest expressed by the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Malaysia in the defence of the region.[9] The development of Commonwealth-specific defence arrangements saw enduring success in the form of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement. This eventually developed into the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, finally transforming into the 1972 Five Power Defence Arrangements.[10] Despite the mixed

6 Indeed it had been noted in the aftermath of the Suez crisis, that the independent capability of the UK to act on the political stage was questionable, and even a collective, Commonwealth-based, effort was dubious. - Annex 2 COS(57)1917 16th December 1957 DEFE 11/192 UKNA

7 Letter from High Commissioner for Canada, London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, 10 May 1956 RG25 Volume 1 50225-40 Part 2 LAC

8 It was through the SEATO planning structure that the employment of British and American nuclear weapons in the region, should they be required, would have been implemented. - Note for the Prime Minister by Chief of Defence Staff 'Nuclear Planning in SEATO' 21 March 1962 PREM11 UKNA. It is interesting to note that an existing Commonwealth defence organisation in the region, ANZAM, was to be used in support of SEATO operations. - 'Discussions regarding the Future of ANZAM' 16th November 1957 DEFE 11/192 COS 1917 UKNA

9 Interestingly there were concerns in Washington that such a formation would be seen as too Commonwealth in nature, although British and Commonwealth thought on the matter ran was that this was an objection as to 'perception rather than substance'. - Report on the Attitude of Australia at ANZAM, Annex A, 12th June 1956 DEFE 11/274 UKNA

10 The Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement was signed in 1957 to provide for the security of the recently independent Federation of Malaya. This agreement carried over with effectively a simple name change in 1963 to the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, following the incorporation of Singapore, North Borneo, and Sarawak into Malaysia. Both of these Agreements were bilateral defence arrangements between Malaya/Malaysia and the UK. They were designed to allow the UK to aid Malaya/Malaysia in its defence both in general terms, and specifically against Indonesia. The Anglo-Malaysian Agreement was superseded by the Five Power Defence Arrangements in 1971 (expanded to a multilateral treaty involving the UK, Australian, New Zealand, Singapore, and Malaysia) which reduced the level of security offered by the previous treaty to an obligation for all five to consult each other in event of an external attack, or threat of attack, solely against the Malay peninsula or Singapore. The evolution of this treaty is something which will be examined in more detail at a later stage. Also see C. Thayer, 'The Five Power Defence Arrangements: the Quiet Achiever' *Security Challenges Journal* 3 (2007) p 79

success of regional defence organisations, and the trouble they often caused even in successful organisations, these forms of regional defence arrangements continued to form the basis for the majority of defence cooperation amongst Western-aligned countries in the following decades. For the Commonwealth their more particular and Commonwealth-specific organisations would come to epitomise future cross-Commonwealth strategic interests and cooperation.

In spite of this strong showing of cooperation in the early years of the decade, internal tensions and problems within the Commonwealth, both structurally and between its individuals members, came to the fore later in the decade.[11] Although the Middle East Defence Conference and the 1st Commonwealth Division were not without their share of problems, it was not until the Suez Crisis of 1956 that the uncertainty of the Commonwealth military relationship became more readily apparent. The importance of the Suez canal and the Middle East to the Commonwealth as had been recognised at the Middle East Defence Conference was sidelined by British politicians in London when preparing a response to Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company.[12] Instead it was clear that the UK government was more concerned with the immediate economic ramifications of Nasser's nationalisation.[13] Additionally the lack of forewarning to the Commonwealth as a whole by the British government undoubtedly strained diplomatic relationships and undermined the principle of Commonwealth cooperation on military matters. It also implicitly questioned the value and application of the Middle East Defence Conference's plan to defend the Middle East with Commonwealth forces. If the Middle East Defence Conference had outlined its priority and the plan of action necessary for the Commonwealth to take for its defence during a global war, the Suez crisis clearly highlighted the limited time-frame in which the Conference was relevant and applicable.[14] The questions that British

[11] These would also become the subject of numerous editorial commentary across the Commonwealth, particularly in relation to the apparent lack of cohesion, as well as the fallout of some the politically embarrassing events occurring in Commonwealth territory – such as the Kashmir crisis and South Africa's 'apartheid excesses'. - Despatch no. 338 from High Commissioners for Canada, Australia, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 27 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[12] Although this should be readily apparent it was noted by the General Staff of South Africa that the deterioration of the Suez Canal between 1956 and 1957 reduced the maximum draught of ships capable of using the canal to 33 feet, down from 35 feet 6 inches, would impact on existing shipping. - General Staff Intelligence Committee Summary no. 31/57 6 September 1957 MV 208/151 SANDFA

[13] R. Tignor, 'The Suez Crisis of 1956 and Egypt's Foreign Private Sector' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 20 (1992) p 294

[14] Indeed by 1961 British military expenditure in the Far East would be double that spent in the Middle East (£55.1 million compared to £23.9 million in the Middle East). - Annex to Memorandum by the Prime Minister 'Our foreign and defence policy for the future' Part 1 29 September 1961 PREM11 UKNA. Also, after the Middle East Defence Conference only British forces allocated to NATO were considered in relation to specifically address the outbreak of a global war. - Annexure 1 to Appendix B to Annex of COS(60)276 1st April 1961 DEFE 7/2232 UKNA

action in the Suez raised, and the strain this placed on Commonwealth relations, was further complicated by subsequent developments in the UK, as well as in British overseas territories, which led to the rapid expansion of the Commonwealth at the end of the decade.

Indeed the aftermath of the crisis informed and altered the understanding of defence arrangements in the UK. This naturally had implications for the direction and progress of Commonwealth military cooperation, which until 1956 had seen some successes. The UK's action over the canal not only highlighted the limited applicability of the strategies that arose out of the Middle East Defence Conference, but also pointed to the limited consideration given by the UK to an area which had been, only a few years earlier, declared of interest to Commonwealth military operations as a whole. More to the point it was not only a failed instance of military cooperation but advanced the idea that Commonwealth political support could no longer be counted upon to be favourable or remain silent. Making a virtue out of the change Prime Minister Macmillan of the UK commented that "the strength of the Commonwealth association was shown in the way in which the various members had been able to take part in a reasoned and objective discussion of the important issues at stake in the Mideast".[15]

Further to the issue of changes within the Commonwealth the impending decolonisation of imperial territory, especially in Africa after Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' speech, initially only had a subtle and indirect influence on Commonwealth defence cooperation. Despite a slow low-impact start the long-term implications of the decolonisation of Africa were quite severe on the prospects for Commonwealth defence cooperation. The decolonisation of Africa disturbed the strategic position and priorities of the UK in such a manner that Commonwealth defence plans and assumptions made in the early 1950s became increasingly irrelevant. The result was that not only did political developments as a result of the decolonisation process affect the Commonwealth but it altered the requirements and obligations of the UK so drastically that the *raison d'etre* for cooperation was fundamentally shaken. This in turn threatened the very existence of Commonwealth military cooperation.

The overarching interpretation of events presented in this thesis to explain the course of

[15] Prime Minister's Conference Third and Fourth Meetings Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

Commonwealth defence cooperation over the post-war period is fundamentally a simple one. It is essentially argued that Commonwealth defence cooperation continued apace, despite being plagued with various issues, in the immediate post-war period. The rapid expansion of the Commonwealth in the early to mid-1960s exacerbated existing problems with the very concept of the Commonwealth and specifically of Commonwealth defence cooperation. New countries to the Commonwealth fuelled a vociferous desire for formalised Commonwealth institutions which undermined existing, and largely informal, arrangements. Increased membership of the Commonwealth, particularly by new states which did not predominantly identify themselves as British and who in the main were not privy to levels of bilateral cooperation with the original member states of the Commonwealth.[16] This contributed to a growing inability to reach consensus.[17] This lack of consensus created problems of official nomenclature for the Commonwealth.[18] This manifested in the realm of defence cooperation in a wide variety of fields, including defence research.[19]

Regional military cooperation

Although the initiatives and endeavours the Commonwealth undertook between the late 1940s and mid-1950s were often strained this was, nevertheless, a time which saw the execution of the broad outlines of what might be seen as a defence policy aimed at defending Commonwealth territory using resources from throughout the Commonwealth. Although the extent to which such a Commonwealth defence policy existed is debatable, there was certainly an attempt to formulate one in the early 1950s.

[16] This was especially true on matters of defence India, Pakistan, and Ceylon, for instance were not invited to participate in the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science (and curiously the US was invited to attend, if on an informal basis). - Memorandum for Mr. Robertson 'Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science' 15 September 1948 RG 25 Box 2892 Volume 1 File 220-A-5 LAC

[17] The entirety of new member states to the Commonwealth were recently decolonized imperial British territory. The cultural ties which had previously existed between Commonwealth members, simply did not exist in any significant faction in the political or cultural make-up of these new states. There was also no long-standing tradition of political engagement which could be drawn from. The result Commonwealth expansion was an increasing difficulty in reaching consensus on any particular issues, and the introduction of problems in cooperation, particularly in matters of defence, which are of a particularly sensitive nature.

[18] This is a recurring issue following the expansion of the Commonwealth. Whereas previously consensus in the Commonwealth was either achieved, ignored, or assumed, there begins a shift following the expansion of the Commonwealth towards the non-use of the adjective Commonwealth to describe joint military actions, an issue aptly displayed in the changing nomenclature of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade to the 28th ANZUK Brigade, with absolutely no other change whatsoever.

[19] The difficulties in defence research were particularly concerning to the Canadian government. They were quite insistent, following discussions with the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Chairman of the Working Party [of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science] that the 'Defence Research meeting... should not be described as the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science and that consideration should be given to changing the title.' and specifically there 'need be no use of the word 'Commonwealth'.' - Telegram no. 1813 from High Commissioner for Canada in Great Britain to Secretary of State for External Affairs 16 October 1948 RG 25 Box 2892 Volume 1 File 220-A-5 LAC

The Middle East Defence Conference, and much of the defence cooperation undertaken in the early 1950s, suggested that some level of progress had been made in the direction of formalising and acting upon Commonwealth-wide strategic goals. This post-war inter-Commonwealth cooperation and strategic alignment did not, and arguably with the expansion of the Commonwealth could not, last forever. The deployment of the 1st Commonwealth Division marked a pinnacle in the area of broad cross-Commonwealth defence relations that was never reattained after 1951.

It has long been held in the historiography of the British Empire that the Suez crisis was one of the key turning points in the decolonisation period of the British empire.[20] In this context the consequences of the Suez crisis not only had an immediate effect on the UK but also influenced the development of the Commonwealth. This is especially true with respect to the various military forces of the Commonwealth and their capability and desire to operate in conjunction with each other under the Commonwealth title. This was not a direct nor immediate outcome but rather an eventual development. This was a development which was influenced by the unsettled political circumstances, both domestically across the Commonwealth and internationally outside of it.

Some of the finer connecting points between the outcomes of the Middle East Defence Conference and the outbreak of the Korean War, particularly regarding the formation of the 1st Commonwealth Division during that war, merit further consideration. Overt cross-Commonwealth defence cooperation was not universally accepted at the Middle East Defence Conference. Even amongst those countries which had previously engaged in defence cooperation were far from united at the Conference. South African and Canadian objections to various issues on different grounds were illustrative of the fragile nature of Commonwealth defence cooperation during the period.

South African objections to the continuation of wartime liaisons in peacetime were ultimately understood as relating to how these wartime liaisons would be described rather than their purpose.[21]

---

[20] J. Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2015) p 193

[21] This would not be the last time that South Africa would raise issues regarding the title, rather than the substance, of matters. In the Agreement over the Simonstown naval base, for instance, objections were raised to the use of the 'the South Atlantic Strategic Zone' when describing the bodies of water on either side of South Africa. They preferred the Southern Africa Strategic Zone. Such debates surrounding the nomenclature of such organisational activities reveal the growing level of self-interest across the Commonwealth. - 'Proposals of the South African Members concerning arrangements as an alternative to UK Proposals in paragraphs 35 to 41' June 1955 MV 190 Simonstad SANDFA

These objections had been ongoing since 1949.[22] At least initially the concerns of the South African government were in the realm of presentation rather than substance. This was undoubtedly part of the ongoing domestic unease at the continuation of the Commonwealth military link in South Africa. As Commonwealth attitudes to South Africa's domestic policies hardened in later years so too would South Africa's government, and particularly the National Party, become increasingly disillusioned with the Commonwealth. The discomfort South Africa felt in the Commonwealth was reciprocated throughout the Commonwealth in later decades. This ultimately resulted in the ejection of South Africa from the Commonwealth. With respect to Commonwealth defence cooperation during the 1950s, however, it was clear that there were underlying issues already present in South Africa that were frustrating Commonwealth defence cooperation.

Perhaps the most striking display of disunity amongst the Commonwealth at the Conference came not from South Africa but rather from Canada, the oft-called 'Senior Dominion'. The lack of Canadian involvement in the Middle East Defence Conference on strategic grounds[23] was a stark indication that defence cooperation would not continue in its existing form indefinitely. Canadian military involvement with the Commonwealth was by no means ended, but it was threatened by Canada's new approach to its strategic interests. Canadian objections to the Middle East Defence Conference were reflective of that shift in strategic priorities from a global strategy to one more regionally-based.[24] This was not a shift which was confined to Canada: the strategic priorities of the various Commonwealth countries became dominated by regional concerns as they entered into an era which placed a premium on regional rather than global defence. The outbreak of the Korean War, and specifically the formation of the 1st Commonwealth Division, interrupted this before it was fully realised. The Korean War marked the pinnacle of the pre-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation style at a time when alternative arrangements were being explored but not yet implemented.

---

22 Telegram no. 1083 from High Commissioner for Canada, London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, 4 May 1949 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

23 Memorandum for Mr. Pearson (Minister of External Affairs, Canada) 21 May 1951 RG25 Vol. 5963 File 50227-40 Part 1 LAC

24 Memorandum for the Minister 'Middle East Defence Conference', with attachments, 28 May 1951 RG25 Vol. 5963 File 50227-40 Part 1 LAC. Note: Particular emphasis was placed upon rectifying the apparent misunderstanding by the Commonwealth Relations Office in London that there had been a suggestion from Canada to expand the terms of the Middle East Defence Conference to include the Pacific. They sought to clarify that if the terms were expanded to include the Pacific then they would review the question, the implication being that they would be more fully involved in the Conference, but not that they were asking for the terms to be extended.

The Korean War

The Korean War aptly demonstrated the ability of the Commonwealth to operate a multinational force in pursuit of like-minded objectives amongst the involved nations. The formation of the 1st Commonwealth Division and the successes of the Commonwealth operating a fully functional and relatively unified fighting force in an active theatre during a time of war was no mean feat. Although the Division during the war was not without its detractors nor its share of problems, it illustrated what could be achieved. The circumstances of its formation were not straight-forward, nor even indicative of a Commonwealth that was united. It was constituted in such a manner that it did not include the entirety of the Commonwealth but was seen as, and considered, a Commonwealth endeavour. This continued a tradition of approach to Commonwealth defence cooperation that underscored a basic principle that unanimity of action was not required for Commonwealth defence cooperation.

Which Commonwealth states provided forces, materiel, or financial support to the Division, and how that cooperation was received at the time is crucially important. The 1st Commonwealth Division is one of the most distinctive features of Commonwealth defence cooperation in the latter half of the twentieth century. The contributions that comprised the Division speak to the potential future development of Commonwealth defence cooperation in the post-war era. The most notable initial aspect of the formation of the Division was that it was not met with widespread enthusiasm amongst the Commonwealth governments. It was, in fact, as much encouraged by overburdened US command staff as it was by any intrinsic belief that a multitude of Commonwealth forces could be combined into a single entity.[25] This was reflective of the uncertain basis for Commonwealth defence cooperation that was encountered, and overcome, by a variety of Commonwealth countries in the pursuit of a common military objective. It was by no means certain that the defence cooperation displayed amongst the Commonwealth during the Second World War could be repeated in the post-war period, especially given the new desires of the Dominions, and the introduction of new states into the Commonwealth.

The development of the Division exposed some of the ongoing issues and challenges faced by Commonwealth defence cooperation in the early 1950s. There are three key factors which are of immediate concern with respect to the overall progress of Commonwealth defence cooperation and the varying levels of enthusiasm in each of the participating countries. These are 1) the initial framework

[25] Cabinet Report on Proposal for Formation of a British Commonwealth Division in Korea 16 November 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954-1682-2 ANA

for the Division, 2) the use of the 'Commonwealth' adjective in spite of the non-participation of certain Commonwealth countries, and 3) the comparative ease of cooperation relative to the difficulties other multinational formations had during the Korean War.

The framework for Commonwealth forces in Korea was the British Commonwealth Forces in Korea (BCFK, a designation which categorised all army, naval and air units of the Commonwealth in Korea). This was initially constituted out of the formations previously posted to the British Commonwealth Occupying Forces in Japan (BCOJ).[26] Interestingly the BCFK was commanded by an Australian army officer,[27] while concurrently the 1st Commonwealth Division was consistently led by British Army officers.

Secondly the constituent members of the Division and the terminology considered appropriate to its designation is a particularly important factor to consider. Despite the absence of South African and Pakistan soldiers, and the inclusion of Indian personnel from the Republic of India, the retention of the word “Commonwealth” in the formation's title highlighted how post-war defence cooperation had adapted to the new Commonwealth. The adaptability of the Commonwealth in the face of adverse political developments was already well established, and the changes in the late 1940s, initially at least, betrayed no fundamental change to Commonwealth defence cooperation. Indeed the deployment of forces under the Commonwealth banner, without the consent or involvement of the entire Commonwealth, had long been established as noted in the previous chapter. The 1st Commonwealth Division demonstrated how an active combat formation could continue with that approach even with the introduction (and removal) of a number of states to the Commonwealth. Between 1945 and 1951 the Commonwealth gained two members states, the Republic of India and the Republic of Pakistan, and lost two member states, the Irish Free State and the Dominion of Newfoundland. The initial effect of those changes on the broad strokes of Commonwealth defence cooperation, as it existed at the turn of the 1950s, was effectively nil. Indeed, there was no reason to think – in 1951 – that Commonwealth military cooperation would be unduly affected by changes occurring within the Commonwealth more

[26] Cabinet Report on Australian participation in Cold War Operations in Korea, Australian Forces placed at the disposal of the UN, 15 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954-1682-2 ANA

[27] This arrangement had been accepted by the British government at the request of the Australians as it related to the non-operational control and general administration of the force. However, this was only to continue until the Canadian views on such an arrangement were made clear. - Cabinet Report on Australian participation in Cold War Operations in Korea, Australian Forces placed at the disposal of the UN, 15 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954-1682-2 ANA

broadly.

Finally it is worth mentioning the international dimension of the war, and the problems the multitude of formations from different doctrinal backgrounds and languages created for Allied forces in Korea. This made the mix of Commonwealth forces into a single cohesive formation a comparatively easy task given the similarity of their doctrines, equipment, and language. Insofar as Australian strategic priorities were concerned, especially in light of the growth of regional endeavours, their commitment to the Far East in the BCOJ was hardly surprising.[28] Similarly, outside of the UK, the constituent members of the Division were all drawn on a regional basis. The Australian and New Zealand contributions are most obvious in this regard. Although Canadian participation is hardly surprising either it was perhaps a little more suspect given their attitude to events in the Middle East at that time. The Indian government's interest in the Far East was well known.[29] Although the Indian contribution was more symbolic than anything else, it was a potent symbol of the possibilities that could still be said to exist for future Commonwealth defence cooperation in the early 1950s.

Although the Middle East did not lose its position as the jointly agreed theatre of primary importance for the Commonwealth as a whole until the mid-1950s, the indications of a switch to a more regional basis of defence in the Commonwealth that had been present, as previously documented in the last chapter.[30] The acceptance of an Australian commander for all Commonwealth forces in Korea reflected the relative ease with which the Commonwealth was able to field a multinational force. It also reflected an acceptance, at least in some measure of non-operational control, of the need to provide more senior positions for those 'local' Commonwealth forces in regional deployments.

This denotes a broader point in Commonwealth defence cooperation: who was to command? It was understandable when contributing to a multinational military formation under the Commonwealth

---

[28] Report on Machinery Established for Cooperation in British Commonwealth Defence December 1950 A5954-1798-10 LAC

[29] Indeed the Indian government had often acted on the behalf of new states in the Far East, even when doing so was impractical or embarrassing to the Commonwealth or the US. This is especially true of their policy on China, which Mr. Nehru was keen to emphasise must be admitted into the UN. - Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference Fifth Meeting Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[30] It had, however, been a potential point of contention for some time prior see Telegram no. 1239 from the High Commissioner for Canada, London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 21 May 1951. RG 25 Vol. 5693 File 50227-40 Part 1 LAC

banner that it would be led by officers of the government which was generally considered the head of the Commonwealth and contributed the lion's share of the maintenance of the Division. It seems more unusual to find acceptance of that same level of leadership being exercised by another member of the Commonwealth, in this case Australia, especially when their contribution to the effort was overshadowed by deployments from other Commonwealth countries. This was the case for Canada which, despite contributing more to the 1st Commonwealth Division than Australia, found itself in the unusual position of operational control of its forces falling under a Australian officer in a nominally superior placement as commander of the BCFK.[31] Although this must be tempered by the fact that command of the 1st Commonwealth Division remained in the hands of British officers, and that the individual contributions to the Division were ultimately responsible to their respective national governments. Notwithstanding the complications of such organisational leap-frogging, that approach certainly served a unique purpose in smoothing out any tensions. That was not a panacea for all ills and the appointment of an Australian to command BCFK caused consternation amongst British officers commanding the 1st Commonwealth Division, particularly when it came to representing Commonwealth activities in Korea to the US.[32]

It is worth noting that the relative contributions of the members involved in the Division varied widely. India's contribution, for instance, with respect to its population and capabilities paled in comparison to what other members of the Commonwealth provided. Furthermore, many of the existing problems with Commonwealth defence cooperation continued into the coming decades. In particular the domestic problems of new member states, a shifting international and Commonwealth perspective on military affairs, and the difficulty in breaking into the existing clique-like relationship maintained amongst the older members of the Commonwealth all hindered such efforts.[33] The inclusion of an Indian contribution masked some of these issues. The symbolism of their participation in the Division

---

[31] Cabinet Report on Commonwealth participation in Cold War Operations in Korea 16 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954 File 1682-2 ANA

[32] There is an interesting crossing point between the command of British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan (led by Australian commanders) and British Commonwealth Forces in Korea where there were British objections to the BCOJ commander representing the UK Chiefs of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief of UN forces in Korea. See Cabinet Report on Organisation of British Commonwealth Forces in Korea, Directive to Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Occupation Force, 17 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954 File 1682-2 ANA

[33] Even where efforts were made to include new member states into defence matters, such as the invitations offered, and refused, by India, Pakistan, and Ceylon to the Middle East Defence Conference there seems that little consideration was given to this as it would 'not detract from any likely support that may be forthcoming in the event of war'. Telegram no. 1239 from the High Commissioner for Canada, London, to Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada 21 May 1951. RG 25 Vol. 5693 File 50227-40 Part 1 LAC

is not to be underestimated. It hinted at the possibility of an expanded Commonwealth that was open to the prospect of defence cooperation. The underlying basis of Commonwealth defence cooperation was strong. Although there were problems and difficulties with the 1st Commonwealth Division, its successes came at a time when the Middle East Defence Conference remained relevant and, at worst, hid the cracks in the edifice of cooperation and, at best, genuinely pointed to the potential the Commonwealth had for continued cooperation in defence matters in 1950.

One of those cracks which marred the 1st Commonwealth Division was the refusal of the South African government to provide ground forces to Korea. It stands to the good nature of the Commonwealth in relation to the obligations of member states that little was made of South Africa's non-involvement. The loose structure of the Commonwealth allowed for non-participation without reproach. This helped prevent a fracturing of the Commonwealth over these sorts of issues. This loose structure was certainly an advantage in ensuring the continuation of the Commonwealth in the first instance, and also in catering for its potential expansion. Nevertheless it was a structural failing with respect to military cooperation. The uncertain foundation of coordination and involvement made it susceptible to attempts to formalize its structures in a manner that failed to preserve its original intent. This was precisely what happened to the Commonwealth in time. The flexible structure which had operated in the Commonwealth in almost all matters was in effect overcome by a more rigid form of engagement that dominated Commonwealth proceedings from the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is equally important to note that this informal structure, particularly in the realm of military cooperation, persisted until 1971.

Indeed it was this formalisation of institutions and practice which was one of the most obvious transformative processes in the Commonwealth as it grew. The replacement of relatively close inter-Commonwealth meetings with a Secretariat and formal conferences had been slowly making ground over the preceding half-century. The steady shift towards the formalisation of relations similar to the relations maintained amongst other sovereign states became a catalyst behind increased distance between Commonwealth countries. Ultimately, as the Commonwealth expanded, pre-existing informal ties were swept away and replaced with more formal arrangements. The loose requirements of Commonwealth participation which accepted South African non-engagement in Commonwealth forces in Korea, is just as important in highlighting the shift to regional strategic priorities as it is in

identifying a structural failing in the Commonwealth. The loose structure of Commonwealth cooperation undermined the prospect of expanded defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth as it grew larger. Not all of this can be laid at the feet of the expansion of the Commonwealth. There had been a growing desire amongst the older members of the Commonwealth themselves for more formal arrangements as well.[34] What the situation in Korea demonstrated was two-fold. First it indicated the potential for new members to cooperate in defence matters within pre-existing defence arrangements and relationships, and second it revealed the lack of drive amongst Commonwealth countries for a defence cooperation.

The lack of a driving force was demonstrated in the formation of the 1st Commonwealth Division. The formation of the Division itself was not driven by Commonwealth preferences but rather by US desires to reduce their own difficulties in coordinating such a diverse international effort. Although the initial conception of the Division may have been urged by a foreign power, the practical implementation of this cooperation was such that, despite the occasional bickering over Dominion and British officers, Commonwealth defence cooperation performed as a coherent formation rather well.[35] While the Korean War may have highlighted clear strategic structural failings of the Commonwealth as a whole, it also demonstrated the significant success the Commonwealth could enjoy even if as a collective they were not particularly enthused by the idea.

There was no great relief, or acceptance, amongst the various senior military officers of the Commonwealth that this multinational Division would succeed. The contingents from Australia, New Zealand, and the UK were more closely involved with each other than amongst any combination of the other participants. This was undoubtedly aided by the fact that the Australian and New Zealand contributions of battalions and companies respectively were fully integrated with larger British formations. Meanwhile Indian, and even Canadian, involvement remained circumspect and under constant review.[36] It is illustrative of Canadian involvement in the whole affair that their primary contribution of a full brigade to the Division was, in effect, a fully coherent element (with the exception of a brief period between December 1950 and July 1951 when the Canadian contribution was still

[34] Letter from High Commissioner for New Zealand, Canberra, to Minister for External Affairs, Canberra, 7 June 1955, British Commonwealth Strategic Reserve TS682/22 Part 2 ANA

[35] J. Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p 187

[36] Cabinet Report on the Organisation of Commonwealth Forces in Korea 16 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954 File 1682-2 ANA

being brought up to strength).[37] There were strong Canadian objections to the 'dispatch of a company of the 25th [Canadian] Infantry brigade to Koje Island without prior consultation with the Canadian government.' Although it was acknowledged that there were immediate military necessitates regarding the security of prisoners of war which required this action it was urged that the company should 're-unite... with the rest of the Canadian brigade as soon as possible.'[38]

Similarly, the Indian contribution to the Division came in the form of a self-contained field unit.[39] Furthermore, and this perhaps raised more questions as to the unified nature of the Division, the Indian government did not engage with the higher command machinery provided for the formation, nor were they particularly interested in its affairs more generally. The involvement of the Republic of India in the 1st Commonwealth Division was certainly a symbolic indication of potential future cooperation, or at least a recognition that new member states might also contribute to such endeavours. In reality the limited nature of their contribution, coupled with their reservations regarding the machinery established in Australia for the management for the Division, undermined the value of their involvement. The reservations surrounding Canadian and Indian involvement is important as it correlates directly to their absence from subsequent cooperation amongst the British, Australians and New Zealanders which arose directly from this Division.[40] It is notable that the cooperation that led from the 1st Commonwealth Division amongst Australia, New Zealand, and the UK was regionally-based in South-East Asia. It is that regional interest which ultimately struck at the heart of Commonwealth problems in ensuring a continuation of defence cooperation from the 1950s onwards. Although this interest in a regional approach to matters of defence was not a trend directed by any one factor, the net result was ultimately a strain on cross-Commonwealth strategic priorities, even at the highest political levels.[41] This strain was exacerbated by the rapid expansion of the Commonwealth over the course of the next two decades. Ongoing endeavours in Commonwealth cooperation, especially with the 1st Commonwealth Division, must be weighed against such developments. The Division may have been undermined and restricted by the issues set out above but it left a long-lasting legacy amongst some of

[37] Manpower issues would plague the Canadian military establishment for the duration of the conflict, with much interest and effort expended in ascertaining the exact nature of the problem and how it might be best fixed at the highest level of Canadian Army. - RG 24 Vol 6927 Report no. 72 'Canadian participation in the Korean War Part II: 1 April 1952-31 July 1953 LAC

[38] Report no. 72 'Canadian participation in the Korean War Part II: 1 April 1952-31 July 1953 RG 24 Vol 6927 LAC

[39] P. Lowe, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies towards Japan, China and Korea 1948-53,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) p 194

[40] Cabinet Report on Commonwealth participation in Cold War Operations in Korea 16 December 1950 Prime Ministers' Conference London A5954 File 1682-2 ANA

the participants. Canadian and Indian forces did not build on the existing structure. All of their respective military personnel departed in mid-1953 and were not replaced. In contrast, British, Australian and New Zealand forces, largely the remnants of the 1st Commonwealth Division, continued as the 28th Commonwealth brigade. This brigade saw service throughout South-East Asia and lasted, in a variety of different forms, until the mid-1970s.

The accomplishments achieved by Commonwealth forces during the Korean War were impressive. The Commonwealth had formed a multinational formation comprised of both existing and new members of the Commonwealth in a time of war. Although it may be too far to suggest that this force was raised to defend their joint interests in the Far East, it nevertheless worked remarkably well in the pursuit of that goal. Despite the problems that it encountered, and its relatively short existence, the fact that the Commonwealth managed to form a working Division at all speaks volumes as to the state of Commonwealth defence cooperation at the turn of the 1950s. The shift towards regional arrangements, and the creation of the Division, further demonstrated the possibility of future cooperation with the various members of the Commonwealth, irrespective of when they joined or the changes to their respective national interests. It was not a definite advance in this direction but rather ensured it as a future option, including if not interest then at least acceptance of the possibility of such cooperation. In addition this was undertaken in the form of a full, visible and conventional Division which saw active combat in wartime.[42] This was an example of the possible continuation of Commonwealth defence cooperation in an era following two major wars that required different technological and political approaches.

Regional defence organisations

The growth of regional defence arrangements was precisely the kind of development that

[41] The pattern of business discussed, and indeed the commentary recorded, in the 1953 Prime Minister's meetings highlighted the attention being directed towards Asia and South-East Asia and with a comparative lack of discussion surrounding Europe. This caused some concern to the Australian Prime Minister Menzies, who had initially raised the matter at the outset of proceedings. Although he found some support from the Indian Prime Minister Nehru in that the matter and it was appended to the final day of discussions its initial absence, and brief treatment, highlighted its lack of priority in the Commonwealth. Additionally, despite the willingness to hear the views of other Commonwealth members, India was unwilling to adopt any final communique which threatened its policy of non-alignment, which included even an expression of hope that the European Defence Community be established at the earliest possible date. The result, as proposed by Sir Winston Churchill, was that 'it would be better to say nothing on Western Europe than to show that there was no unanimity of opinion.' - Minutes of 4th Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 8 June 1953 MG26L Vol 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) LAC

[42] Notwithstanding the fact that the UN labelled the conflict as a 'police action'.

dominated national strategic planning in the 1950s. This was one of the key elements which undermined the continuation of Commonwealth defence in its existing form. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) established in 1949 was quickly mirrored by similar, though generally less successful, regional defence arrangements elsewhere. This included the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954.[43] A new organisation which was quickly followed by the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) in the Middle East in 1955.[44] Until the creation of these regional organisations outside of the North Atlantic the Commonwealth's acknowledged structure of global Commonwealth defence, such as it existed, remained the accepted practice for the various members of the Commonwealth. This global approach to defence planning encouraged contributions from all members of the Commonwealth. It effectively sought to establish the idea that the most important strategic interest of the members, as a whole, took priority over the immediate defence of any individual member. These new regional organisations presented a different approach, one reliant on the individual member states doing their utmost to defend their immediate surroundings rather than attempting to plan for and execute a broader global strategy.

Nowhere was the old style of strategic implementation of defence planning across the Commonwealth clearer than in the Middle East Defence Conference and in plans to reinforce the Middle East with troops from throughout the Commonwealth in the event of conflict. It is notable that the type of conflict played an important role in dictating the relative priorities of the different areas to which the Commonwealth considered sending troops. The Middle East in the event of a global conflict was, at least until the early 1960s, considered the key area of operations. Detailed timetables for the deployment of troops from across the Commonwealth were considered and distributed.[45] These plans were largely incompatible with the changes in warfare since the development of the atomic bomb. Deployments of weeks to months were simply not relevant when a potential conflict could be settled in days or weeks with the use of these new weapons. This is particularly true of the preferred USSR approach to nuclear weapons which saw an emphasis on the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons

---

43 Basic Documents Volumes I and II: American Foreign Policy 1950-1955 'South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty (Manila Pact)' 8 September 1954 p 912-915

44 B.K. Yesilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East 1950-59* (Routledge, 2005) p 75

45 Appendix no. 1 'Requirements for Middle East Defence : Targets for Commonwealth Countries proposed by UK to Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers 21 to 26 June 1951: Defence Policy and Global Strategy – the Middle East A5954 box 1799 ANA

alongside conventional armies.[46] Interestingly the Commonwealth viewed tactical nuclear weapons in much the same light as the USSR.[47] These views were at odds with the US approach to such weapons, which had considered tactical nuclear weapons as an 'uneconomical sideshow'.[48]

This global style of defence was ultimately and entirely made obsolete by such technological advancements. The speed with which a conflict could start, develop and be won or lost threatened the viability of long-distance deployments. Throughout the 1950s the Russian nuclear arsenal, and the nuclear threat in general, was not so significant as to cause an immediate reconsideration of military preparations but it became an increasing concern into the 1960s.[49] Consequently the switch to regional defences, from a strategic standpoint, looked increasingly attractive and coupled with ongoing political difficulties in the Middle East pushed the Commonwealth away from a 'traditional' approach to their joint defence. As this changed it proved especially problematic for the continuation of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The physical distance between the members of the Commonwealth was such that they were not in a position to support each other with any significant speed.[50] Neither were they universally in possession of a capability to rapidly deploy forces overseas to different theatres. In fact, this was arguably a capability which could not be possessed in the 1950s given the limitations of military technology of the period.

---

[46] This was largely considered to be the result of a stagnant Soviet military doctrine. Between 1947 and 1955 it was believed that persistent 'Stalinist rigidity' that permitted no reassessment of Stalin's five factors of war kept Soviet views on nuclear weapons fixed on their use in a broad assault across Europe. Detailed Soviet plans regarding the initial invasion of Europe '[contrasted] sharply with the vagueness and generality of treatment of the strategic nuclear exchange'. This was further reflected in their force composition which was believed to encompass approximately 1,200 separate delivery systems for weapons in Europe '510 MRBMs, 56 IRBMs, and 700 medium bombers, compared to the 195 heavy bombers and approximately 70 ICBMs it possessed which were capable of striking at the US. - Special Reports Section 64/63 Attitudes to Deterrence D13/112 DEFE 7 25 June 1963 UKNA

[47] This was also the view of the UK, who had formed the opinion that tactical nuclear weapons could be used with more frequency and in more situations than could be achieved by strategic nuclear weapons. Appendix B to JP(60)16 28 June 1960 DEFE 7/2231 UKNA. Australian views on the value of tactical nuclear weapons were very similar to this as well. Australian service personnel had formed the view that it would be impossible to defend against a conventional invasion without these weapons. A position, much like the US experience, that was reflective of their own particular circumstances and really indicative of the uncertainty of doctrine surrounding their employment. - Attitudes to Deterrence Annex to Attached Note SRS. 64/63 25 June 1963 DEFE 7/2396 UKNA

[48] The US had grown increasingly disillusioned with the value of tactical nuclear weapons from the 1960s, and both their weaponry and strike plans were predicated on a strategic strike plan rather than as a force multiplier for conventional forces. - Attached note to Letter to Direction J.I.B. (MoD) from R.J. Reid, 25 June 1963 DEFE 7/2246 UKNA

[49] The Soviet nuclear programme in the 1950s was in its nascent stages. It was not until 'the late 1960s' that it was believed that the Soviets would possess sufficient capability to render 'US “overkill” capacity irrelevant'. - Special Reports Section 64/63 Attitudes to Deterrence D13/112 25 June 1963 DEFE 7 UKNA

[50] The Prime Minister of New Zealand was moved to comment on this very subject in early 1951 when he said that 'in view of its [New Zealand's] geographical isolation, New Zealand could easily adopt an isolationist policy'. - Prime Minister's Conference: Third and Fourth Meetings Annex to Despatch No. 339 from High Commissioner for Canada, Australia to Secretary of State for External Affairs Canada 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

Although a global defence plan continued to focus on the Middle East and remained paramount for some time, the growth of and interest in regional defence organisations was undeniable and, apparently, irresistible. There were many different causes for this including 1) the need to ensure US support, 2) the deployment of forces in a manner which would fit into expected US deployments,[51] 3) US and Soviet preferences for conflicts to remain 'local',[52] and 4) the increase in the number and applicability of nuclear weapons, particularly those which could be used tactically.[53] Whichever combination of factors resulted in this doctrinal shift in any particular military establishment all pointed to a single overriding problem: if Commonwealth defence cooperation was to continue it would have to fit into this new pattern of multinational regional defence. Some effort was made towards this end with the creation of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement in 1957.[54]

The growth, interest and involvement of the different members of the Commonwealth in these regional defence organisations and how they affected the development of a unified Commonwealth defence more generally is the pertinent point here. There are two basic concepts that form the basis for the development of the growth of these organisations over the course of the 1950s. Firstly, the global strategic picture emphasised the need to obtain and maintain US support for any defensive effort. Secondly, the global political situation required an approach which avoided the creation of a 'white man's club' or an impression that such efforts had the intent of propping up imperial powers. Avoiding those characterizations was considered to be vital to attract US support, and these concerns altered the shape and direction of Commonwealth defence efforts.[55] The success, failure, and existence of these

---

51 The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve: View of the Minister of Defence on the Action taken 9 June 1955 TS682/22 Part 2 UKNA

52 There were ongoing doubts in both Western Europe and in the Soviet Union that the US would not respond to a nuclear attack launched anywhere except on American soil. As technological advances were made and, according to the Special Reports Section of the British Joint Intelligence Bureau, as a result 'the US need of overseas bases diminishes... both the US and the Soviet Union might then be interested in keeping war in Europe “local”, though not necessarily non-nuclear.' - Special Reports Section 64/63 Attitudes to Deterrence D13/112 25 June 1963 DEFE 7 UKNA

53 Report for the Prime Minister on Nuclear Weapons 30 December 1959 PREM 11/2945 BND (SG)(59)30 UKNA

54 It is interesting to note that the AMDA was intended as a bilateral arrangement between the UK and Malaya which could be used as a basis for the inclusion of other Commonwealth members in the region, namely Australia and New Zealand, to be incorporated into its provisions. - Prime Ministers Conference June 1956 – Supplement No. 1 to Defence Brief: Working Party on Malayan Defence Agreement Part I 18 June 1956' A5451 box 446 ANA

55 Commonwealth force contributions, to a variety of defence engagements, was often predicated on US support. A change in Australian and New Zealand contributions to Korea depending on US requests has already been covered above, while similar issues would subsequently arise in SEATO over force deployments concerning the defence of the Kra isthmus. Indeed it had been considered that holding the Kra isthmus was 'impractical and politically dangerous' in the absence of such support. - Background Brief on Defence of Malaya: Far East and Pacific Department 19 December 1960 DO 169 UKNA

regional arrangements also had a serious and long-lasting effect on the developments in Commonwealth defence cooperation in the following decades.

Although regional defence arrangements were tried in a variety of different places they were most successful in the North Atlantic and in South-East Asia. The former was not dominated by Commonwealth interests in even the broadest of interpretations. British and Canadian involvement was consistently tempered by US dominance in the organisation and the primacy of concerns of NATO rested on the European continent, which had limited interest for Commonwealth member states outside of the UK itself.

Contrast this limited level of involvement amongst the Commonwealth in the continent of Europe with Commonwealth involvement in South-East Asia. This was a region which featured a mixture of Commonwealth and local self-interest that immediately included a dominant Commonwealth amalgamation of interests. An amalgamation of interests which included Australia, New Zealand and, at least until 1972 and even arguably thereafter, the UK. Also there were two new states in the region, Malaysia and Singapore, which were both new members of the Commonwealth. These five Commonwealth powers, each disposed to working with their Commonwealth neighbours created a set of circumstances in South-East Asia which were far more favourable to the expression of Commonwealth strategic interests in an organized fashion than existed in any other region.

It would be remiss not to mention the failed attempts at creating regional Commonwealth structures in the Middle East. After all, the Commonwealth had devoted a significant amount of time and planning throughout the 1950s to its defence in the event of war with the USSR. Although attempts to create stable defence arrangements in the region amongst local powers failed to materialise the reality that attempts were made in the hopes of replicating the success the Commonwealth found in South-East Asia is, in itself, significant. Although regional defence arrangements were certainly not the be-all and end-all of Commonwealth defence thought they presented a viable alternative to prior practice that was more in-keeping with the changing political atmosphere and technological capabilities of the day. The Commonwealth's ability to adapt to particular circumstances had long been known in other theatres. Indeed there is a similar demonstration of the elasticity of Commonwealth 'policy' (to the extent that it can even be considered a coherent policy) in their approach to the new regional

breakdown of defence planning and the growth of localised national interests.

The changing political atmosphere not only necessitated a new outlook to defence planning but also undermined the possibility of a successful shift to a regional defence structure that would be conducive to the long-term deployment of Commonwealth military forces in a unified manner. The growing interest in national priorities could certainly be considered a key factor. Furthermore the explicit requirement for US support to make these support structures viable was a reflection of the geopolitical situation and the inability of the UK to maintain its position relative to changing strategic issues. This was plagued with uncertainty and, ultimately, failure.[56] US interest in global defence on a regional basis was, particularly in the early 1950s in South-East Asia, lukewarm at best following their reversal in China. This was openly admitted by the US in frank discussions with the UK in mid-1950.[57] By contrast British policy in South-East Asia had been relatively successful.[58] Indeed, it was largely considered agreeable by the majority of the Commonwealth.[59] To ensure that would continue securing US support was considered one of the core principles of UK defence policy. It was an approach that resonated across the Commonwealth both individually and collectively, and had done so for quite some time.[60] US involvement, whatever strings may have been attached to such engagement, was invariably preferable to their non-involvement.

This affected the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation in two key ways. First, it demonstrated a continuance in shared strategic thought amongst the Commonwealth. It may have been driven by a variety of different factors, circumstances and the wider geopolitical situation but the end result was that the key Commonwealth governments were generally of the same mind when it came to the importance of US support. Second, US support and leadership was not always beneficial to

---

[56] The Indian administration under Prime Minister Nehru had formed the opinion that the US had 'followed a wrong policy'. The result being that 'at the end of the war [the Second World War] no country had been so popular in China as the US and now it was the most hated'. - Minutes of 2nd Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 4 June 1953 MG26L Vol 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) LAC

[57] Specifically it was said that 'The defence of Malaya is an obligation falling primarily upon the British Commonwealth'. - Letter from the Prime Minister of the UK to the High Commissioner (Australia) to the UK re: Discussion with US Authority on Defence in South-East Asia 25 April 1955 – Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference London 1956 – Defence Brief A1209 box 446 ANA

[58] P. Hughes, 'Division and Discord: British Policy, Indochina, and the Origins of the Vietnam War 1954-56' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28 (2000) p 100

[59] Australia confessed a desire for a solution short of recognition, but it was alone in this regard. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

[60] Report on Strategic Position of the British Commonwealth January 1950 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

Commonwealth strategic planning as a whole even where it might have been perfectly suited to regional strategic planning by individual Dominions.[61] This second point was not apparent until after the US had been convinced to engage with Commonwealth endeavours. Although the rest of the Commonwealth may have had little to say on the ANZUS treaty the subsequent British outcry at their exclusion were indicative of the problems US involvement posed to Commonwealth strategic planning. Policy complications that arose as a result of attempting to secure US support were not limited to issues of inclusion, and divergent policies between the US and key Commonwealth countries – especially the UK – were problematic.[62]

The formation of both CENTO and SEATO as regional defence initiatives supported by the Commonwealth are worthy of further comment. It is important to note that, leaving aside the problems US involvement caused, these arrangements were examples of the manifestation of the shift to regional defence.[63] The manner in which they were undertaken through the mix of Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries was both a blessing and a curse. In a sense that approach allowed for the regional arrangement to happen in the first instance, which was obviously vital to the whole concept. However, their outcomes were less than stellar, and more worryingly these efforts undermined previous work by diluting the coherency and primacy of cross-Commonwealth cooperation in matters of defence.[64]

---

[61] This would become a sticking point, for all members of the Commonwealth, during their cooperation with the US. The British reaction to the ANZUS treaty, specifically their non-involvement in it, is but one example. British agreement with American representatives that nuclear strategic planning for South-East Asia did not need to be extended to include Australia or New Zealand, is another example of the sort of disengagement that occurred amongst the Commonwealth when involving non-Commonwealth states in the regional defence of either individual Dominions or broader strategic policy.

[62] Some indication of the difficulties that existed for both Australia and New Zealand in South-East Asia would come to light over how to approach the Chinese. This was most clearly seen in the 1954/55 crisis which highlighted, for New Zealand, the difficulty and necessity of reconciling the two divergent policies their closest allies followed. - S. Kaufman, 'Operation Oracle: the US, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1954-55' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 32 (2004) p 120

[63] CENTO, originally known as the Baghdad Pact, was initially formed in an effort to 'develop Iraq's treaty relations to meet the threat of Communist aggression... from the north'. This was to be done 'in harmony with Article 51 of the UN Charter', and subsequently used as a means of obtaining and subsequently assuring British and American assistance in the defence of the region which 'have traditionally relied on Western support'. - Baghdad Conference Reference Division Report no.3782 'Origin of the Baghdad Pact' December 1957 MV 196 SANDFA

[64] In the preceding half-century Commonwealth defence cooperation, possibly more aptly described as Imperial defence organisation, focused on a global, rather than regional, approach. Colonial and Commonwealth troops were deployed throughout the Empire were needed, with little thought extended to the regional matters that might arise from their departure. The most infamous example of this, of course, is the loss of Singapore in 1942, an important port in South-East Asia defended by British troops while regionally drawn troops from Australia and New Zealand were deployed to fight in the Middle East.

The Suez Crisis

The global changes aside, the Suez crisis in 1956 showcased the change in inter-Commonwealth defence relations. The crisis severely damaged Commonwealth relations and given its nature this posed serious questions as to the nature of military relations amongst the Commonwealth as well. The UK's decisions in the lead-up to the crisis were all quite curious. This is particularly true in relation to the inception of the plan and the failure to consult the Commonwealth, even on a limited basis, on a matter of Middle East defence little more than half a decade after the Middle East Defence Conference. It was hardly five years previously when the strategic importance of the region to the Commonwealth as a whole was recognized. It had already been accepted across the Commonwealth, and in military and political circles in the UK, that there was an absolute need to coordinate a combined defensive effort with allies to safeguard their overlapping strategic interests. It would not be such a leap to imagine that events in the early 1950s suggested the development of a much more inclusive and combined Commonwealth defence effort that might become increasingly dominant in Commonwealth relations.

Not only was the Commonwealth uninvolved, but such was the reaction to the crisis by the Commonwealth that it moved Prime Minister Pearson of Canada to comment that it could undermine the very existence of the Commonwealth.[65] The justifications that may have been made for that are of less importance than the fact that the Commonwealth was not involved in any way prior to the event taking place. The very basis for Commonwealth defence cooperation had failed miserably when presented with the clear possibility of operating a distinct military initiative in a region which was decidedly within an area of joint strategic interest to key countries in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth reaction, in this context, is rather enlightening as to the overall shift in strategic priorities amongst the Commonwealth members from the early- to mid-1950s. Whatever coherence the Commonwealth may have had in terms of strategic planning before the Crisis it was thoroughly lost in the varied reactions they expressed. There was neither a singular point of objection as to how the British Prime Minister Anthony Eden handled the crisis nor anything remotely resembling general agreement on the basis on which any of their objections could be founded. Although there was some consistency amongst some Dominions, the initial cross-Commonwealth reaction ran the gamut. Indeed there were some notable inconsistencies amongst various

[65] K. Srinivasan, *The Rise, Decline, and Future of the British Commonwealth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) p 38

Commonwealth members. A similar sympathetic reaction to the crisis was shared by Australia and New Zealand.[66] This contrasted sharply with the less amenable views held by both India and Ceylon.[67] However, that should certainly not be given to imply that there was a uniform reaction amongst the older Commonwealth members. South Africa's utter disinterest in the affair was as notable as Canada's comparatively hostile reaction.[68] The disunited position of key Commonwealth countries revealed the fragile state of cross-Commonwealth defence cooperation. This is especially important when considering the cohesion of political will in the Commonwealth on a global scale regarding key defence issues. The inability of the Commonwealth to cooperate on a single matter in an area which had been previously recognised as a core strategic interest of the Commonwealth was a clear demonstration of the unreliability of the Commonwealth connection in defence matters. Further, it illustrated the gap that had developed between the realities that the Commonwealth faced in the post-war era, internally as well as externally, with the strategies that were advanced in Commonwealth meetings during the early 1950s.

The outcome of the Suez crisis resonated throughout British politics. The replacement of Anthony Eden by Harold Macmillan was accompanied by a change in thinking with regards to the developing international situation. Specifically there was a re-evaluation of the British empire and the accelerated release of overseas British territory in the form of new states, though perhaps not of nations in the strictly understood meaning of the term.[69] Their immediate introduction into the Commonwealth added unstable and uncertain elements into an international organisation under the guise of securing them from Communist influences. This was also considered in London to somehow provide for the

[66] The Australian reaction, in this regard, was more favourable to the UK than the New Zealand response. Menzies' views, as he gave to the Australian parliament prompted a strong retort by the Evatt, then leader of the opposition. See R. Menzies, *Afternoon Light* (Sydney: Cassel, 1967) pp 173-176. The New Zealand reaction, by contrast, although politically sympathetic to the British cause, was undermined somewhat by an insistence that the RNZNS ship in the region would not be used in support of operations. - Letter from S.G. Holland to Eden 1 November 1956 ADM 114/6097 UKNA

[67] Report of the High Commissioner on a conversation with Nehru 31 October 1956 FO 371/12785 UKNA

[68] For Canada see M. Fry, 'Canada, the North Atlantic Triangle, and the UN' p 312 in W.R. Louis & R. Owen *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (London: Clarendon Press, 1991). South Africa had washed its hands of the whole affair, with the Prime Minister of South Africa J. Stridjom declaring that it would not involve itself in a domestic affair. See *The Star* (Johannesburg) 31 July 1956 (and a subsequent clarification issued the following day in the same paper 1 August 1956).

[69] The majority of imperial British territory was not released under any form of national identity with respect to the people involved. In many cases federations were preferred, in the Caribbean, West Africa, and even South-East Asia the release of imperial territory was done under a basis of how economically viable these new states would be, and how stable a political system could exist in such circumstances. Ultimately, the majority of these federations would fail, but regardless, the 'nation' was not the primary tool of division for the release of imperial territory during the decolonisation process.

maintenance of the British sphere of influence in those countries.

UK strategic doctrine

The third primary element of this chapter addresses the changed strategic priorities in the UK. This change was accompanied by a reduction in military spending and capabilities.[70] This included a short-lived, and unsuccessful, attempt to rely primarily on the influence and power of the British nuclear arsenal in the late 1950s to early 1960s with a corresponding reduction in the number and location of deployments by the British armed forces overseas.[71]

This was in spite of a recognition that the primary draw on military resources at the time was conventional in nature, and that a 'disproportionate effort' was being expended in the pursuit of these nuclear weapons. The UK, while subjected to such a huge draw on its military forces voluntarily undertook a massive expenditure in the pursuit of ensuring that there were 'further concrete examples of interdependence' with the US.[72] Cuts to the conventional sections of the UK's armed forces were already in motion and the reductions it was subjected to were given more energy by the Suez crisis, rather than being a directly attributable outcome of it.[73] Indeed there were serious and ongoing concerns about the capability of the Royal Navy to continue to perform its function even before the Suez Crisis.[74] In the aftermath of Suez with the proposed £325 million budget of the Royal Navy it was thought to

---

70 Report on Defence Expenditure 1956, Memorandum by the Admiralty December 1956 AIR 19 Box 34

71 In actuality the British armed forces found that, in order to ensure the safety of deployed tactical weapons more conventional support was required, not less. - COS(60)175 Annex C 11th January 1961 DEFE 7/2231 UKNA. It was noted that approximately '100 megaton weapons for strategic use and at least 1,500 tactical weapons for defensive purposes.' This was considered purely aspirational given the uncertainty of developing a British nuclear weapon, and indeed ensuring adequate fissile material for said development. The attraction and potential of these weapons to perform that function, however, was established. - CAB 131 'Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet: Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons – Defence Committee 30 May. It should be noted that the 100 megaton weapons at the time of this note was in reference to the Skybolt which the British Minister of Defence (Watkinson) would later outline to his American counterpart (McNamara) in 1962 that the final figure would number 'over 100'. - Record of Meeting between H. Watkinson, and R. McNamara, 1 May 1962 DEFE7 UKNA. Indeed there were ongoing concerns that the UK would be unable to respond convincingly to more than one active limited war scenario at a time. - Annex to COS(63)384 DO 169/269 UKNA.

72 Specifically 'In discussion [at this meeting] there was general support for collaboration with the US on these lines [referring to cooperation in nuclear weapons development – and with immediate reference to Blue Streak and Thor] which would constitute a further concrete example of interdependence.' It goes on to comment that '...a detailed assessment should be made of the financial savings which could be obtained if Blue Streak was not developed as an operational weapon, taking account of the cancellation charges' with the implication given throughout that although the need for the weapon was relatively minor operationally under current demands it was a necessary tool to possess, and that possession should be independent but if possible offset through direct cooperation or purchase with or from the US. - Cabinet Conclusions CAB 131 D(58)15 UKNA

73 The British had explained that the cuts were necessary as 'if the forces were not reduced, the defence expenditure would have risen steeply, particularly in the view of the sharp increase in the cost of new weapons.' As such, while the Suez crisis may have highlighted the issues involved it did not create them. - General Staff Intelligence Committee no. 42/57 Part IV 22 November 1957 MV208 SANDFA

seriously endanger its core functions.[75] This move towards a reduction of British military capability and a strategic shift did not bode well for Commonwealth defence cooperation. It limited its conventional forces to such a degree that any cooperation could pose additional untenable commitments.

This period of uncertainty and transition in UK defence policy influenced the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The two aforementioned developments alone would have a profound and lasting effect on Commonwealth relations. Indeed, this ultimately laid the foundation for the split in the style and manner of defence cooperation undertaken amongst the Commonwealth in the decades thereafter. The particulars of this period of transition merit some consideration. The abortive endeavours to reorient the UK's armed forces to a nuclear basis were mostly driven by economic concerns.[76] This economic impetus to favour the development of strategic nuclear weapons to the detriment to the conventional forces was used as a bargaining tactic in debates over the allocation of defence expenditure in the UK.[77] The reduction and consolidation of British deployments at a global strategic level continued throughout the mid- to late-1950s. This was not the same at the regional strategic level where the development of nuclear weapons had long since threatened the continuation of central and heavily fortified bases. The effect was a consolidated global approach with individual

[74] There were even concerns that, with this level of reduction, it would not be possible to perform the supposedly intended function of the Fleet during the Cold War, which was to fight 'Limited Wars' as defined by COS(56)219 in June 1956 following a subsequent review of the Suez Crisis in late 1956. - 1956 Memorandum by the Admiralty Point 31 AIR 19 UKNA. It was noted that 'Musketeer [British codename for the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt] has now given us a yardstick by which to measure our forces.' and the post COS(56)280 proposals would result in a Fleet which would be found sorely wanting in any similar future engagement.

[75] Cuts had been considered by the Admiralty even prior to the Suez crisis, with COS(56)280 in late July establishing the need for the Royal Navy to reduce itself to an order of four carriers, eight cruisers, twenty-nine destroyers, forty-nine frigates, and thirty-nine submarines. After the Suez crisis these were reduced even further, to three carriers, three cruisers, twenty-four destroyers, thirty-seven frigates, and twenty-six submarines. The reaction from the First Sea Lord in a letter to the Minister of Defence regarding these cuts was predictable and in the aftermath of the Suez quite blunt. In it he said that 'it is interesting to note that … in an operation against a fifth rate power, we [the Royal Navy] had to deploy three operational carriers... and three non-operational carriers for use as fast transports'. The implication was clear: the government needed to reverse its cuts, or be faced with a situation where it would no longer be able to mount such operations even in conjunction with the an allied power, like the French. - Letter from Louis Mountbatten [First Sea Lord 1955-59] to Sir Walter Monckton [Minister of Defence 1955-56] Point IV December 1956 AIR 19 UKNA

[76] The Chancellor of the Exchequer had sought the reduction of £100 million in the 1964-65 year, with an immediate halt to discussions regarding the construction of 'another carrier' and 'work/services' at Aden. He also cited that 'we have long ago decided that in war we should fight with Allies or not at all' as the basis for the reductions and that there was a discrepancy between what was being calculated for in the estimates and not the commitments 'implicit in the political assumption [of Government that] … we shall not require to maintain bases in Aden and Singapore, or mount assault operations single-handed East of Suez and that the defence budget in that year will not be allowed to exceed 7 per cent of the GNP'. - Minute for the Prime Minister 'Future Defence Policy D(63) 23 & 24' 9 July 1963 PREM11 UKNA

[77] See specifically commentary that the 'successive Defence White Papers … [the] Americans and Canadians' had indicated 'the need to build up, under present day strategy, a substantial contribution to the nuclear deterrent of the West at the expense of conventional forces' - Policy Review: Paper by the Admiralty 1956 AIR 19 UKNA

concentrations subject to region-wide dispersal of defence efforts.

By the turn of the decade the UK had, in effect, retreated to three cores in which they concentrated the majority of their armed forces. Their primary theatre included Europe and was focused on the British Isles and British forces deployed to Germany, particularly the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). In discussions with the US it was made clear that their ongoing contribution here could only be seen in relation to the British contribution to 'the defence of the Free World East of Aden'.[78] Commonwealth involvement here was limited, and even then conducted largely under the auspices of the US and NATO. A second primary theatre covered the volatile Middle East, and was built around a number of bases scattered throughout the region. The most important of these was Cyprus, which included storage depots for nuclear weapons. By the mid-1950s the Middle East was no longer even notionally supported by the promise of Commonwealth reinforcements. Finally South-East Asia featured prominently in overall defence planning which, despite the distance and supposed primacy of the Middle East in any global conflict saw the largest deployment of British troops and advanced weaponry outside of Europe.[79] It was also the recipient of major airfield upgrade works of approximately 3 million pounds Sterling at RAF Tengah.[80] This amount was allocated in order for it to be expanded to store nuclear weapons and allow Vulcan bombers to take-off and land there.[81] Undoubtedly the tensions in South-East Asia were a contributing factor to this development but there remained the underlying issue that despite the advanced strategic plans of the Commonwealth for the Middle East in the early 1950s, events and circumstances would conspire to see successful Commonwealth military initiatives in South-East Asia, and British deployments were altered accordingly.

---

78 Record of Meeting between H. Watkinson, and R. McNamara, point 2 1 May 1962 DEFE7 UKNA

79 It should be noted that South-East Asia was not immune to defence cuts and force reductions. However, in South-East Asia during the 1960s these would most often take the form of consolidation of existing forces with battalions and companies being exchanged within the region and only superfluous headquarters and signal squadrons being disbanded or returning to the UK. - Annexure 1 to Appendix B to Annex of COS(60)276 1st April 1961 DEFE 7/2232 UKNA. Also see Annex C to COS(60)276 1st April 1961 DEFE 7/2232 UKNA

80 This would also include the deployment of the Bloodhound MkII air defence system, which was designed to protect the airfield from the latest Soviet bombers. -Annex C to COS(60)276 1st April 1961 DEFE 7/2232 UKNA

81 Questions were raised regarding the political objections to a British nuclear bomb store at RAF Tengah and the possibility of British nuclear weapons in the region being based out of their remaining aircraft carrier(s) instead. These objections and alternatives were eventually overcome. Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the Defence Committee: The deployment of V bombers with nuclear capabilities in the Far East 19 February 1958 CAB 131 UKNA To accommodate the Vulcan bombers the runway had to be expanded to 9,000 feet and a 'special nuclear bomb store' had to be built. Memorandum by the Minister of Defence for the Defence Committee: The Deployment of V Bombers with Nuclear Capabilities in the Far East 14 February 1958 CAB 131 UKNA

There are two key points regarding British Commonwealth defence cooperation in these three centres of importance that are worthy of consideration. The first is that British strategic doctrine sought to consolidate strategic capabilities on a regional basis. Additionally, anything that might arguably be considered a 'Commonwealth military initiative', was built around these regional structures. The second is that as the strategic basis of British deployments and strategies shifted to this regional basis, the disinterest between Commonwealth countries and any particular region grew. This was already seen in the early 1950s with the reluctance of the Canadian government to involve itself in the Middle East Defence Conference on the basis that it was not of strategic interest to Canada. Herein lies the important point of this selective and restrictive process of self-confinement of strategic priorities amongst the Commonwealth after 1947: a distant regional endeavour held little to no interest to a comparatively weak power on the other side of the world. However, a regional endeavour which did meet such regional prerequisites was much more likely to be viewed with interest. Although this did not guarantee support it resulted in a steady growth of political will towards localized/regional defence. The pull towards this growth was felt in the UK as well. Although it would take until 1972 to manifest fully the steady withdrawal from a global basis of deployment to a much more restricted and localized effort had well and truly begun by 1957.

The strategic reorientation from a global to a regional perspective across the Commonwealth both led and followed by the UK left the Commonwealth in a particularly good position to take advantage of any new countries granted independence from the British Empire. It established a ready framework of strategic interest into which new states could find natural positions and roles. Indeed, this is precisely what happened in South-East Asia with respect to Malaysia.[82]

Harold Macmillan's speech in South Africa in 1960 marked a crucial turning point in the development of Commonwealth affairs. His speech referred to the 'Winds of Change' and a new British policy in favour of the relatively rapid and peaceful release of territory from the British Empire to new independent states under the aegis of the Commonwealth. The measured withdrawal from imperial territory on reasonably agreeable terms, in order to avoid a forced ejection, was perhaps one of the most iconic moments in British decolonisation. Although certain upsets and failures were all but

[82] South-East Asia is the only region which involved new members of the Commonwealth in Commonwealth defence cooperation, first through the two forms of the AMDA, and subsequently through the expanded membership, albeit with more limited terms of reference, of the FPDA.

inevitable the general success of the implementation of the British decolonisation "plan" was not met with the same level of success in terms of the UK's goals for the Commonwealth, and certainly did nothing to encourage or facilitate Commonwealth defence cooperation.

The structure of the Commonwealth

The informal power-structure and organisation of the Commonwealth was not a system which held up particularly well to the expansion of its membership. Although suggestions of formalisation of relations in the Commonwealth had been aired before they had met with little success. The largely homogeneous culture, similar decision-making systems and practices had established the Commonwealth as a reasonably well-organized international community with understood mores and procedures. The Commonwealth was tied together through cooperation in civil, scientific, and military matters starting as early as the turn of the century and kept largely so through a continued cross-pollination of people. The dominance of the UK in the Commonwealth structure had been accepted and questioned in equal measure. The inconsistencies in that relationship were not, in the main, found uncomfortable. The understanding reached at the Middle East Defence Conference and during the Korean War with respect to the 1st Commonwealth Division were highlights, though far from unblemished, of the continuation of prior cooperation. It was a close and engaged community that had not yet grown to the point where any official sort of organisation, outside of the most very basic, was necessary.

It was this simple structure that was strained by expansion. That expansion prompted the Commonwealth to adopt a different organisational method. Such an informal and collegiate approach to an international organisation was only possible in the circumstances in which the Commonwealth was originally established. If the organisation was to do anything of substance with so many new members it needed to be reformed. Indeed such reform had been advocated for, and rejected, in the past. The demands that the policy behind the Winds of Change speech made and the circumstances of the time obliged a short time scale in which to complete the release of territory from the British Empire than had originally been envisaged.[83] The resulting rapid growth of the Commonwealth manifested a

[83] In 1947 the time for independence, if it were possible, of Central and East Africa was considered to be measured in 'generations' rather than 'years'. Some commentary has suggested that this is due to the background of the people who, having served in a 'different type of Africa' were now in senior positions throughout the Colonial Office. - Cell J., 'On the Eve of Decolonisation: The Colonial Office's plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa 1947' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Issue 8 Volume 3 p 254

significantly different style of organisation that was, in almost every respect, at odds with the previous iteration. The prospect of a repeat of the Middle East Defence Conference from the 1960s onwards, which would have been reasonable given the drastic changes in the geopolitical landscape in subsequent decades and the shifts in military thought globally, were remote.

In some aspects the developments of the particulars of this new Commonwealth are rather obvious. Although the launch of a Secretariat did not happen for some time there was a clear desire amongst the new members to reorganize a system of communication amongst the Commonwealth. Prior Commonwealth discussions had arrived at the conclusion that institutions like a Secretariat were not needed and might even be counter-productive.[84] The change in the Commonwealth's membership struck down that argument at a fundamental level. Indeed, the composition of the Commonwealth as it grew larger brought about a significantly different political outlook. That outlook was focused on internal development, and organisation and the progress of its members, rather than primarily existing as a convenient political vehicle of cooperation and solidarity.

The problems that this posed for the original Commonwealth members do not appear to have been immediately clear to their respective political and civil establishments. If they were, then they were pointedly ignored or dismissed. The introduction of new members of the Commonwealth, coupled with the global, rather than regional, nature of its membership flew in the face of prior Commonwealth defence cooperation. The global perspective and defensive arrangements that were a hallmark of early 1950s planning had, by the early 1960s, transformed into regional clusters of interest. Any proposed return to a more global perspective was complicated by contemporary military thought and the series of technological developments, especially in strategic weapon systems favoured by the UK and the US. A repeat of the 1st Commonwealth Division, or a similar Commonwealth formation, was not well suited to the environment in the 1960s either.[85] A lack of compelling local reasons for the creation of such a

[84] B. Vivekanandan 'The Commonwealth Secretariat' *International Studies* 9 (1967) p 302

[85] Even in the field of regionally-based cooperation there were underlying tensions in the Commonwealth with respect to defence cooperation. A particularly unproductive meeting between South African and British representatives in 1957 regarding the joint defence of the High Commission territories and the Union of South Africa demonstrated the fragile nature of Commonwealth defence cooperation even prior to South Africa's break with the Commonwealth in 1961. The UK, having declined to allow the transfer of the High Commission territories to the Union subsequently declined to involve the Union in the defence of the territories because 'the security of the territories [was] vested exclusively with the UK government'. A position which caused 'surprise and regret' on the South African side of the table. - 'Minutes of the Discussion between the Minister of Defence of the Union of South Africa and the High Commissioner for the UK at Pretoria 28 October 1957 MV 207/151 Samesprekings Minister en Sir P. Liesching SANDFA

formation, in conjunction with international circumstances, largely prevented any such project from arising, even if it had been desired.

Macmillan's 'Winds of Change' speech, and the implementation of the policy which followed, heralded the beginning of the end of Commonwealth defence cooperation as it had been envisaged and acted upon for the past half-century. The expansion of the Commonwealth complicated intra-Commonwealth relations, and the original members of the Commonwealth were not exempt from these shock waves. Although it affected Canada and South Africa more so than the Australia, New Zealand, or the UK the circumstances under which this expansion was carried out hindered the continuation and inclusion of the new Commonwealth states in matters of defence. Such cooperation did not cease immediately and in one case continued until 1972.[86] Although the expansion of the Commonwealth was not a single event but one which continued over several years with the majority in the early to mid 1960s the situation in the Commonwealth before and after the period of expansion caused irrevocable change. This change was not amenable to a continuation of defence cooperation in the Commonwealth structure. This change ultimately had a dramatic effect on the development of the Commonwealth, although one lacking the immediate force of the Suez crisis. It caused a divergence in the trend established in the preceding years regarding how multinational defence arrangements were organized.

Conclusion

Starting from a high point of cooperation in 1951 the Commonwealth was not in a position to replicate such ventures by the end of the 1950s. It was a task which was not to become any easier over the course of the next decade. The ever-present and increasingly irresistible, if sometimes fluid, international circumstances were ultimately compounded by the Commonwealth's response to international events and, in particular, to the British handling of the Suez crisis. The shift from global to regional strategic thinking, both in the Commonwealth and elsewhere, was difficult to express in terms of pan-Commonwealth defence cooperation. The combination of these factors were catalysed in a speech in South Africa by Harold Macmillan that set in motion a train of events and a policy which forever altered the fundamental make-up of the Commonwealth. This altered composition of the Commonwealth proved not to be conducive to the continuation of a tradition of, in the main, well-

[86] Despite a number of name changes and adjustments, a joint Anglo-Australian-New Zealand existed right through until 1972. First in the form of the 1st Commonwealth Division, then the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, before finally being renamed to the 28th ANZUK Brigade, with no real change in procedure. It was essentially the exact same thing, just with a name change. See the following chapters for more detail.

received Commonwealth military cooperation.

There are three key elements in this declining cohesion amongst the Commonwealth that are important to future developments and, certainly, integral to the over-arching argument made in this thesis. First, it must be recognized that the early 1950s demonstrated key successes in Commonwealth defence cooperation, particularly with the 1st Commonwealth Division in Korea, but also in the effort to ensure that the Commonwealth continued to perform some measure of common strategic effort. Second, the period demonstrated the structural weakness in the Commonwealth system as an international body and its unsuitability in ensuring that military cooperation could continue through it after expansion. Finally, British strategic policies, both military and those related to the maintenance of its Empire, created a maelstrom of uncertainty that undermined potential future defence cooperation. It signalled an approach to the expansion of the Commonwealth and the dissolution of the Empire that did not account for how Commonwealth defence cooperation might continue during and after expansion.

Indeed the clear and organized structure which the Commonwealth sought to implement during its expansion was not a process which was replicated in military affairs. Instead such endeavours were left unregulated and were adopted in specific regions in specific circumstances without much thought as to the possibility of the broader inclusion of the Commonwealth more generally. The specifics of this will be addressed in due course, but the absence of any method to cater for the continuation of military cooperation alongside the political and economic cooperative endeavours during the 1950s is especially notable. As such, this chapter argues that the key underlying causes that hindered future Commonwealth defence cooperation were hinted at even in the earliest stages of the the process of expanding the Commonwealth.

These three points outline the situation which the Commonwealth, particularly the original Dominions, found itself at the beginning of the 1960s. The change that occurred in the Commonwealth between 1950 and 1961 was quite profound. Early demonstrations of a continuing capability to adapt and organize had fallen flat following political mishandling and an increasingly difficult geopolitical situation that left little in the way of support for the continuation of pan-Commonwealth defence cooperation. The effect of this expansion was not limited to the reduced possibility of defence cooperation. Underlying issues which had originally been previously ignored or deemed counter-

productive (such as the Secretariat) by the Commonwealth were brought under increasing scrutiny with its expansion and this presented serious consequences for the Commonwealth as these new institutions became shaped in a volatile environment.

Ultimately what developed over the course of the 1950s was a growing acceptance and preference for regional defence arrangements that were significantly different to previously established joint Commonwealth military thought and strategy. This shift flourished into a series of regional multilateral arrangements in which the Commonwealth held a subsidiary role specifically engineered to incorporate new members and help ensure US assistance. A mishandling of international politics by the UK in the Middle East, an area which was recognized as a key Commonwealth region in 1950, during the Suez Crisis not only undermined the Commonwealth connection at a particularly vulnerable time but also prompted a nationally-based British retreat and consolidation in a manner which was not conducive to greater Commonwealth defence cooperation.

Although these changes altered how each of the existing members interacted with the Commonwealth as a whole, it had far more specific and significant consequences individually on Canada and South Africa. Two very different outcomes to the changing Commonwealth situation in the 1960s could not have been better expressed than in the changes we see in the role that these two Dominions play in Commonwealth affairs more generally.

Chapter three: Canada and South Africa in the Commonwealth, 1960-1971

Introduction

This chapter analyses the reluctance in Canada and South Africa to be involved in Commonwealth defence cooperation. It points to the growing interest in peacekeeping operations in the Canadian political establishment, as well increased cooperation with the US. It examines the Commonwealth reaction to South Africa's racial policies, particularly as it affected issues of defence cooperation. Finally it explores the dawn of the new larger Commonwealth and the implications that it held for the structure of the Commonwealth. It frames these developments in the context of an increasingly unstable Commonwealth defence cooperation. It argues that Canadian and South African involvement in Commonwealth defence cooperation was influenced by the international context and their own internal desires – and that even these were the product of prevailing international thought on how defence cooperation should function. Furthermore, it points to a significant change in the functioning of the Commonwealth in that it became a vehicle for internal censure and that this effectively established the basis for the future manifestation of Commonwealth defence cooperation through the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force deployed to Rhodesia in 1981. This argument is explored in the chapter through an examination of Canadian military policies, objectives, and thoughts on cooperation with the Commonwealth and the US. It delves into the Commonwealth and UN response to South Africa's apartheid policy, and particularly the reaction and effect it had on Commonwealth defence cooperation – with corresponding implications for South Africa's defence industry. Finally, the chapter concludes by noting the changes to the procedures and methods of the Commonwealth as a result of its expanded membership.

The difficulties in analysing the period between 1960 and 1972 with respect to Commonwealth cooperation, even when limited to key countries of the Commonwealth, are compounded by a number of wide-ranging issues that were largely not significantly present in earlier decades. The growth of the Commonwealth over such a short period of time and the increase in the number of factors and circumstances which must be considered is also problematic. This chapter details the rise of the New Commonwealth and the challenges this posed to Canada and South Africa. The split between the two sides has been made here to distinguish between a clear and distinct departure from past trends, as we see in Canada and South Africa, and what effectively amounts to a continuation of pre-existing

structures and strategies amongst Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. In essence although this chapter and the following one deal with the same time period and the same subject matter – the implications of the rise of the New Commonwealth on defence cooperation – the division is drawn between the two on the basis of outcome. Whereas for South Africa and Canada that outcome was to see a turn away from further Commonwealth interaction on a multilateral military basis the same was not true for Australia, New Zealand and the UK. The introduction of new members to the Commonwealth was not the sole reason for this break but contributed to the impetus for an already growing divergence.

The increasingly hostile reaction to the apartheid policies in South Africa by the National Party government fundamentally undermined South Africa's relationship with other members of the Commonwealth. In Canada the pursuit of its own interests did not always coincide with that of the other members of the Commonwealth. Although Australia, New Zealand, and the UK were far from unaffected by these developments such rapid change in the Commonwealth built on already uncertain views held by South African and Canadian policy-makers on value and purpose of Commonwealth membership. The striking withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth on 31 May 1960 and the realignment of Canadian military interests away from previously held Commonwealth defence interests throughout the 1960s are particularly distinctive. Neither Canada nor South Africa managed to retain much, if any, semblance of previous Commonwealth commitments as a result of these changes.

This decade marked a crucial point in the overall development in Commonwealth military cooperation. New members to the organisation were continually added after 1957, resulting in a substantial growth of the Commonwealth during the 1960s. Central to the course of developments is the concept that the changing nature of the Commonwealth – brought on by the rapid expansion of its membership – limited the ability of the Commonwealth to continue its pre-existing style of military cooperation. Although it was subsequently transformed into something quite different it was the immediate effect of the expansion of the Commonwealth during the 1960s had on Canada and South Africa that must be addressed. Once the dust had settled at the end of the decade these two countries were placed in significantly different political positions with respect to Commonwealth military cooperation. South Africa was almost invariably at odds with any kind of Commonwealth endeavour, and often the subject of the ire of many new Commonwealth countries. Although some links continued throughout the decade, particularly in the realm of military cooperation with the UK, any lingering

possibility of a continuation of South Africa - Commonwealth defence cooperation more generally – irrespective of what form such cooperation would take – was ended by 1961. Canada fared significantly better. It may not have been at odds with the new states but its interests became more insular and focused on the pursuit of its own objectives independent of the Commonwealth. It is worth noting that Canadian policy distinguished between the opportunity that the expansion of the Commonwealth presented, and the risk posed to that opportunity by the existing members of the Commonwealth. This distinction was effectively overtaken by events, as the UN and Canadian interest in peace-keeping and global cooperation had became of interest to Canadian policy-makers from 1957.[1] Indeed, such activity dominated Canadian strategic interests throughout the 1960s. Crucially it advanced its interests in that field with limited regard to its existing Commonwealth connections.

If the cause of the divergent directions these two countries took during this period were relatively similar, their ultimate expression was quite different. Canadian views on military affairs, particularly multinational ones, must always be assessed in relation to US strategic interests. Further, the growth in non-conflict military activities saw strong Canadian participation and interest throughout this decade and resulted in significant growth thereafter. The South African situation stood in stark contrast to the greater focus placed on multinational initiatives taken by Canada. The increasing difficulties South Africa faced in, and after 1961 from, the Commonwealth resulted in an estrangement from Commonwealth military cooperation. As membership of the Commonwealth grew (largely as the result of the introduction of new African and Asian states), and South Africa's domestic policies became the subject of heightened international attention, there was a corresponding surge in the development of a local, distinctive, and successful domestic arms industry in South Africa which included research and development of many technologies.[2] Although the particulars of this will be covered in far greater detail elsewhere it is this unintended consequence of South Africa's pariah-like status in the international community, and its ejection from the Commonwealth, that form much of the crucial points of interest in South Africa's history in military cooperation with the Commonwealth. The continuation of Commonwealth military activity which involved South Africa, although significantly reduced, created a scenario where Commonwealth military relations attracted political condemnation

[1] For more detail on Canadian attitudes to the expansion of the Commonwealth see H. MacKenzie, 'An Old Dominion and the New Commonwealth: Canadian Policy on the Question of India's Membership 1947-49' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27 (1999) p 104

[2] P. Batchelor, 'South Africa's Arms Industry: Prospects for Conversion' p 98 in J. Cock & P. McKenzie *From Defence to Development: Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa* (Claremont: David Phillip Publishers, 1998)

from within the Commonwealth.

This condemnation was conducted hand-in-hand with a root and branch reform of the political structure of the Commonwealth. The existing Commonwealth political system had a troublesome time adjusting to the influx of new members, and was subject to a number of major changes throughout the decade. These changes were not only conducted in older structures such as the Colonial and Dominion Offices in the UK, but included structural and political changes within the Commonwealth organisation. These changes were not always permanent but specific to discussions on an ad-hoc basis that characterised the uncertainty and elastic nature of Commonwealth procedures during the period.[3] Such significant change in the Commonwealth is as notable as the distinct absence of change in comparable military circles. The growth of internal Commonwealth institutions, the expansion of the membership of the Commonwealth, and the relatively static membership of Commonwealth military activities was quite a departure from the displays of military cooperation that occurred in the previous decade when the Commonwealth had last expanded.

Crucial to events and developments throughout the 1960s are three key aspects: first a politically developing Commonwealth, second the growth of peace-keeping style operations and US-influence in joint military initiatives, and third the continuation of Commonwealth military cooperation that did not generally involve the new Commonwealth countries. Together these can form a triad of elements through which developments in Canada and South Africa can be considered.

The overarching story in the development of Commonwealth defence relations hinges on the events and circumstances that emerged from the changing membership of the Commonwealth, in particular the style of interaction that dominated relations amongst those members between 1960 and 1971. The position of Commonwealth military cooperation in 1960 was not particularly good. Despite initial successes at the start of the 1950s there were a series of serious setbacks by the middle of the 1950s as discussed in the previous chapter. By 1959 any hope that there might be some growth of

[3] These difficulties came to a fore in May 1960. The Australian Secretary of External Affairs wrote a personal note detailing some of the oddities and novel introductions that were being introduced into the Commonwealth relationship and its discussions. In it he notes how discussions were facilitated 'outside the Conference in a nearby room (upstairs at No. 10 [Downing St.]) in order to discuss apartheid with him [Mr. Louw].' This was conducted without officials and restricted solely to Prime Ministers and other heads of government. It's indicative of not only the sensitive nature of discussions but also the effort that was expended in ensuring that discussion – where it needed to occur – did in spite of growing difficulties and divergence of views within the Commonwealth. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

Commonwealth military cooperation was exceptionally optimistic. The limited efforts that succeeded throughout the 1960s were quashed by the Singapore Declaration in 1971. Subsequent developments almost a decade later altered that position and allowed for such cooperation to exist, albeit in a very different form. One of the critical factors which remained at the heart of such uncertainty throughout the 1960s was the expanding membership of the Commonwealth. This chapter deals extensively with the various changes in circumstances, specific to the affected countries, internationally, and indeed specific to the Commonwealth, that influenced the progress of Commonwealth military relations between 1960 and 1972.

The issues faced by Canada and South Africa during the 1960s represent an obvious point at which it could be said that the military connection between them and the rest of the Commonwealth came under stress. However, both countries had issues with Commonwealth defence cooperation that predated these new developments. It is important to note that enthusiasm for Commonwealth cooperation was quite limited in South Africa and Canada. Indeed Canada had held itself apart from any particularly Commonwealth defence agreement or arrangement since 1959. Furthermore, local strategic concerns in the North Atlantic and Pacific and southern Africa did not have the same concentration of Commonwealth interests as were found in South-East Asia. Although both the North Atlantic and southern Africa were of importance to the UK there were few other Commonwealth interests in either area. The bilateral engagement that can be seen in southern Africa between the UK and South Africa was mirrored in multinational arrangements that involved both the UK and Canada in the North Atlantic. Given this lack of regional concentration of Commonwealth-specific interests it is understandable that there was no comparable development of Commonwealth defence arrangements to that which would occur in South-East Asia. In effect the retreat to a regional basis of organisation in the 1960s produced a situation where the relationship amongst the five Commonwealth members which had originally held together in a strong military relationship since the turn of the century was being steadily eroded – and ultimately ended with respect to South Africa.

Canada and peacekeeping operations

The details of the approach Canada took to Commonwealth military activity over the previous twenty years and in the preceding decade are worthy of comment. Although the Canadian government recognised the need and importance of a conference on defence regarding the Middle East they were

equally clear that, irrespective of the participating Commonwealth members, they would refrain from engaging in such endeavours that committed them to a region that lacked a clear Canadian interest.[4] The Canadian approach to military affairs between 1960 and 1972 followed a largely coherent trend in Canadian defence policy that had been slowly developed from the immediate post-war period. The new strategic situation which saw the US at odds with the USSR placed Canada immediately between the two in a strategically critical location. This folded neatly into an ongoing defence relationship that blossomed during the late 1940s and continued, largely unabated, thereafter. There also existed an increasing Canadian interest in international peace-keeping activities that developed in parallel to this American-Canadian defence relationship. This new expression of military might, led in many respects by Canadians, in conjunction with an established trend of Canada pushing for structural reform in the Commonwealth placed Canada in a prime position to take advantage of the new political landscape. It is important to note that although there had been a general trend of discomfort with the Old Commonwealth, particularly with respect to its military activities, there was a continuation of involvement. From 1960 onwards this discomfort had evolved and spread.[5] The previously normal interaction amongst the Commonwealth in military activities was not extended to the vast majority of new Commonwealth countries. Instead such cooperation and coordination would now predominantly take the form of sharing non-military scientific and technological research, in conjunction with technical aid.[6]

The circumstances particular to Canada's situation forced a certain degree of split identity in Canadian military policy during the period. Certainly Canada's geopolitical situation placed it between two competing global powers, the US and the USSR. This had an understandable effect on Canadian strategic priorities and further reinforced the desire to acquire US support through cooperation, particularly in matters of defence. Their non-involvement at the 1951 Conference noted the Pacific as a key area of interest to Canada while the Arctic and the North Atlantic were clearly both of apparent

---

4 Memorandum for Mr. Robertson Annex to Proposed Commonwealth Defence Conference 'Proposed Agenda for Commonwealth Defence Ministers' 20 February 1951 RG 25 Volume 247 File D-19-15 LAC

5 Perhaps this could even extend back as far 1956, although this would imply some form of connection between the Canadian commitment to the shift away from the Commonwealth and the failure of the British and their allies at Suez. It is more likely, it has been contended here and throughout, that the immediate effects of the Suez crisis has been over-estimated and, in fact, that its full force was not wholly felt across the Commonwealth, including the Canadian reaction, until 1960 whereupon the UK began a more rapid decolonisation programme than had previously been envisioned.

6 Notably much of this aid would take the form of ongoing work in the Colonial Office, which included a variety of more mundane statistics and national planning, although the extent to which these would be followed-up was limited. - Ittman K 'The Colonial Office and the Population Question in the British Empire 1918-62' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Issue 27 (1999) Volume 3 p 74

concern. Neither of these were of interest to the rest of the Commonwealth with the exception of the UK, and both countries were involved in US-led regional arrangements: NATO in the North Atlantic and a series of Arctic air defence warning systems in the Arctic. The reorientation from a pan-Commonwealth strategic interest to a much more localized one must hardly have been unexpected. What is perhaps more noteworthy is that Canada was quite clearly and obviously the first amongst the Old Commonwealth to prioritize its own local defence on a regional basis by several years. This early prioritization resulted in a quickly completed effective retreat from around the globe. Canadian support during the Confrontation in Malaysia and later conflicts was decidedly light.[7] There was a persistent and enduring refusal to engage in overt Commonwealth military matters that were restricted to the Old Commonwealth. To some degree this can be explained by their more perilous geopolitical situation in which they acted, effectively, as a de facto buffer state between the US and the USSR. The shift away from the Commonwealth cannot be entirely explained by this strategic reorientation, or even by the increased level of US influence in Canadian military affairs. Some analysis is required of Canadian military interests outside of traditional military endeavours. Peace-keeping operations had grown rapidly from the Suez crisis onwards, with Canadian deployments to the Congo in 1960, West New Guinea in 1962, Cyprus in 1964, and several more after 1971.[8] There had developed in the highest levels of political office in Canada a belief that the Canadian military should involve itself in peace-keeping affairs. Such activities would necessarily involve, by virtue of increased demands if nothing else, a reduction in the availability, interest, and capability of cooperative efforts outside of that field.

These peace-keeping missions, or peace support operations in contemporary terminology, were key to the development of the Canadian military throughout the post-war period. Canadian involvement with peace-keeping operations started with the very first UN deployment and saw consistent deployments in conjunction with the UN.[9] Lester B. Pearson (who later became Prime Minister of Canada) was largely responsible for the first armed deployment of peace-keepers as part of the UN

[7] For example the comparative lack of Canadian involvement in the Falklands war or with the Regional Security Agreement in the Caribbean in the early 1980s.

[8] For a history of peacekeeping operations during the Cold War see P. Wood & D. Sorenson (eds) *The Politics of Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), and for more specialised treatment of Canada's role in such operations M. Carroll, *Pearson's Peacekeepers: Canada and the UN Emergency Force 1956-67* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009) & K. Spooner, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping 1960-64* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009) are useful.

[9] Report no. 78 'Some Impressions of UNEF 1957-58' 2 January 1959 RG24 Vol. 6927 This file in particular highlights some of the Canadian views on the other peace-keeping nations which were not altogether favourable. There is an especially disparaging paragraph related to the conduct of Finnish soldiers allowed which included the practice of baiting sharks in the Red Sea and shooting them as they approached the shore.

mandate following the Suez Canal crisis in 1956. Pearson was honoured for his work in ensuring the success of the peace-keeping operation with a Nobel Peace Prize the following year. The effort put forward by Canada, on both an individual level and in terms of its enacted policy, was demonstrative of how instrumental Canada became in both the operation, and initial design and organisation of such operations.[10] These operations often ran contrary to declared Commonwealth interests and were of unknown effectiveness.[11] It is problematic to assume that Canadian involvement in peace-keeping was a demonstration of Canadian ill-will towards the older members of the Commonwealth. However, its actions expressed a *de facto* opposition to specific Commonwealth interests that did not lend itself towards a continuation of defence cooperation into the 1960s.

The particulars of the Canadian deployment to West New Guinea and Cyprus are especially interesting given the Commonwealth connection. Although peace-keeping operations in West New Guinea were deployed on account of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict in that region the resulting Canadian deployment to South-East Asia contrasted sharply with the Canadian reaction to Commonwealth calls for assistance in the same area.[12] The lack of a positive Canadian response to joint Australian, British, and New Zealand operations in Malaya regarding the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation is illuminating.[13] The Canadian contribution to a military effort in a non-Commonwealth country while a neighbouring Commonwealth state was in need of assistance speaks volumes as to Canadian priorities. Although the Canadian deployment to West New Guinea consisted solely of a small handful of personnel and aircraft operating in conjunction with a US squadron the significance of their contribution far outweighed its size.[14] In many ways it was not dissimilar to the involvement of the Indian Field Ambulance in the 1st Commonwealth Division almost a decade earlier. The act of deployment itself spoke rather more as to their involvement than the size of the contribution itself.

---

[10] Ibid. The visiting officer, Captain JA Swottenham, to the UNEF notices that the current commander of the UNEF, although a Canadian, was wearing a 'UN uniform believed to be of his own design as opposed to a Canadian uniform' and that this was reflective of his 'impartiality' towards all constituent contingents of the force.

[11] Indeed the Canadians had noted that the UN Emergency Force had been 'condemned in some quarters as ineffectual'. - Telegram no. 1599 from Prime Ministers Conference to Department of External Affairs 28 June 1957 RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[12] J. Conrad, *Scarce Heard Amid the guns: An Inside Look at Canadian Peacekeeping* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2011) p 86

[13] This is an especially poignant point when viewed in relation to the reservations that both Australia and New Zealand had with taking a hard line against Indonesia in support of the new Federation. Here, although concerned, they do eventually commit to the British position. - Telegram no 482 from Washington to Foreign Office 13 February 1963 PREM11 UKNA

[14] J. Larsen & J. Wirtz, *Naval Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations: Stability from the Sea* (London: Routledge, 2008) p 182

Of greater importance than Canadian operations in West New Guinea was the Canadian contribution to Cyprus. This was the largest Canadian deployment since the Suez crisis.[15] Canadian participation was so extensive that every Canadian battalion eventually served in Cyprus. The political will for the deployment of troops to Cyprus was evident from the outset, with Prime Minister Pearson amongst the first to declare forces for the UN operation. Notably the first deployment to Cyprus was commanded by an Indian general. There was some overlap in strategic priorities here between Canada and India that is worthy of comment,[16] especially as it highlights Canada's broader position with respect to what would come to be known as the 'New Commonwealth'. Peace-keeping operations were prioritized by both countries, and both focused their efforts on providing support to newly established countries such as the Congo, West New Guinea and Cyprus. More often than not they declined to support British operations prior to the deployment of UN forces. The ideological leanings of successive Canadian administrations went beyond a mere interest in peacekeeping. It was more inclined to, if not outright hostility to previous imperial powers, then at least an increased distancing of military relations. This lended itself to a favourable attitude from the aforementioned New Commonwealth.

Shifting Canadian priorities

This new set of priorities in the 1960s is an important point to consider with respect to Canada-Commonwealth relations, military and otherwise. The expansion of the New Commonwealth and the attitude of those new Commonwealth members to the organisation as a whole shaped the way the Commonwealth developed. This was prompted by a new political dynamic that emerged on the global stage. Canadian peace-keeping operations, combined with their reluctance to be seen operating in more conventional military activity, especially in conjunction with nations that might be ill-received by the growing multitude of new states, and certainly helped place it in an enviable position. Furthermore, since the earliest days of the Commonwealth Canada had assumed a leading role in advocating for the change and adaptation of the Commonwealth to suit current circumstances.[17] Canadian politicians, whether by deliberate choice or unintended consequence, found themselves with split interests when it

---

15 J. Hilliker, & D. Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs Volume 2: Coming of Age 1946-1968* (Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1995) p 282

16 Both Canada and India had sought to position themselves as the natural leader of the bloc of countries that constituted the New Commonwealth. - Waters, Christopher 'Australia and the Non-Aligned Movement in Asia, 1954-1955,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* Volume 12 Issue 2 p 155

17 Even if, at times, it had been upstaged by the Irish Free State. See M. Beloff, *Imperial Sunset: Dream of Commonwealth 1921-1942* (Macmillan, 1985) p 99

came to the Commonwealth. On one hand they retained access to the older, rather more informal, corridors of communication amongst the Commonwealth. On the other hand they were making decisions which suited their interests to push for radical change of the traditional organisational structure of the Commonwealth. This came at the price of Commonwealth military cooperation. Additionally, the impetus for such cooperation, as a result of the technological and political change in the past decade had been greatly lessened. Unlike the position adopted by Australia, New Zealand, and the UK which endeavoured to maintain a joint effort Canadian political goals were clearly quite willing to sacrifice such cooperation as and when necessary.

Although this served Canadian interests particularly well, it was a self-serving goal that contributed to the overall decline of broadly-based military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. It was an approach that could not be replicated by the other key members of the Old Commonwealth and cemented the distance between Canada and Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK. Circumstances in the UK, for instance, made such a quasi-abandonment of imperial obligations a distinct impossibility. Whatever might be said about the speed of decolonisation, the UK managed to avoid alienating new states as well as could be expected. It certainly weathered the storm of new political expression at the Commonwealth with far greater ease than France or the Netherlands did with their respective colonies and international post-colonial organisations.[18] The specific circumstances of South Africa effectively put to rest any such notion that it could position itself in a similar manner to the Canadians. It could be argued that both Australia and New Zealand could have replicated the Canadian approach had they avoided their involvement in Commonwealth activities in South-East Asia in support of the UK and took a more favourable view to the New Commonwealth. Such an activity might not even be all that suspect, given that both Australia and New Zealand had clamoured for the political restructuring of the Commonwealth in the form of a Secretariat in previous years. However, their specific circumstances in South-East Asia – and in Australia's case at least the personality of the leading politicians involved – effectively ruled out such action. Rather to the contrary of the Canadian position there was a redoubling of Australian and New Zealand efforts over the 1960s and into the early 1970s in pursuit of the maintenance of the pro-British military connection that the Canadian

[18] See K. Robinson, 'Colonialism French Style 1945-55: A Backward Glance' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) pp 37-38 for further information on the French decolonisation process, and see H.L. Wesseling, 'The giant that was a dwarf, of the strange history of Dutch Imperialism' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16 (1988) p 69, and P. Groen, 'Militant Response: The Dutch use of Military Force and the Fecolonisation of the Dutch East Indies 1945-50' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993) p 41 for further information on the Dutch experience.

government was all too eager to cast aside.

A note should be made of the relatively precarious position of both Australia and New Zealand. Successive Australian and New Zealand governments spent most of the 1950s and into the 1960s attempting to preserve the involvement of the UK and the US in South-East Asia.[19] Neither Australia nor New Zealand could have afforded a break in military relations without the absolute guarantee that such action would not undermine their territorial security. The US desire to secure their version of Australia's 'Near North' placed the Canadians in a far more secure position than Australia or New Zealand could ever have hoped to achieve given the technological and logistical limitations of the 1960s. Of the five key Commonwealth countries considered here only Canada was properly situated in a geopolitical sense to safely and directly act in the manner it did to secure its interests in such a way that left it well positioned to engage with the new Commonwealth countries. Whether this particular Canadian action had more to do with any special desire to act as a 'middle power' of consequence in the post-imperial world, or an active desire to withdraw from the Old Commonwealth community, or both, the long-lasting effect of their policy during these nebulous times effectively ended the possibility that had briefly been raised in 1951 of a widespread continuation of the original styling of Commonwealth military cooperation.

The start of significant and serious peace-keeping operations involving Canada from 1960 onwards became one of the defining points in Canada-Commonwealth relations, especially in the realm of military cooperation. Any return to multi-national Commonwealth defence cooperation similar to the early 1950s which may have been envisioned in Canada or by politicians or military staff elsewhere had effectively ended. The focus on peace-keeping operations coupled with the inability of the remainder of the Old Commonwealth to match Canada's approach brought it out of the Old Commonwealth and into a 'no man's land' between Old and New. Whilst this changed the state of play with respect to the Canada-Commonwealth relationship it is important to consider that this may not, in any significant way, be a new development. It could quite easily have been a continuation of Canada's pre-war position with respect to cooperation amongst the Commonwealth. Such analysis is outside the

[19] This ranged from diplomatic endeavours in attempting to secure a commitment from the US and/or the UK to the region, to imploring for the deployment of nuclear weapons and advanced air defences in Australia and the surrounding area in response to 'Russian bombers [which] had been supplied to Indonesia' and which there were concerns amongst 'high-ranking Australian service officer, and Defence officials that... the whole north coast was wide open.' - Report of Meeting with Professor Tritterton 19 July 1961 DO 164/12/17 UKNA

scope of this thesis but it is important to note, for context, that Canada's position as senior Dominion of the Commonwealth had long been established. It is difficult to see the difference between the lead Canada took in the early days of the Commonwealth and the action they took here, during the first major and significant expansion of the Commonwealth. What can be noted with confidence is that the period between 1960 and 1972 saw a shift in Canada's political position to ensure that it remained well placed to take advantage of the changes that were happening both inside and outside the Commonwealth. The fact that doing so left Canada removed from Commonwealth military operations was a by-product of such activities. Indeed the Canadian cabinet was well aware of the potential for the Old Commonwealth to be seen as a closed club and that it would be beneficial for Canada if it were not to be associated with anything of that nature.[20]

South Africa and the Commonwealth

Whereas Canada went to great lengths to keep the Old Commonwealth at arms length in an effort to help ingratiate itself with the new members of the Commonwealth, developments in South Africa took a very different turn. South African views of the Old Commonwealth, in the immediate post-war period, were more favourably disposed to military cooperation across the Commonwealth than was the case in Canada even if there were concerns expressed about how such cooperation would be received in South Africa. Further to those internal considerations, South African restrictions on overseas deployment arose as a result of difficult domestic circumstances. There was also an ongoing need to mollify a significant minority view held amongst some in the National Party on the value of continued Commonwealth defence cooperation. It may go too far to suggest that there was an ideological alternative or active desire to sever the Commonwealth military connection. More so than any other factor, South African-Commonwealth, and particularly Anglo-South African, relations were in the main complicated by the changing international situation with respect to South Africa's internal policies. Such tension came to the fore in 1961, with the ultimate result of South Africa's withdrawal (though effectively an expulsion) from the Commonwealth entirely. Issues relating to the continuation of military relations proved a cause for concern for both South Africa and the UK throughout the decade.

There were two methods in which pressure was brought to bear on South Africa by the

[20] S. Brawley, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigrations to Australasia and North America* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995) p 281

international community: 1) The overarching international condemnation by the UN which started in 1963, and 2) condemnation from inside the Commonwealth. Both of these expressed themselves in ways which made military cooperation exceedingly difficult if not outright impossible. Pressure brought on by Commonwealth member states, in particular, made the growing discordance in the Commonwealth on military matters abundantly evident. The 1961 Prime Ministers' Conference was perhaps one of the earliest, and most overt, manifestations of such internal tension.

South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth was complicated by international interest in its apartheid policy. The Canadian government was, unsurprisingly, the only government which deviated from the reaction of the other governments of the Old Commonwealth. The Canadians supported the new Commonwealth countries which, unanimously, indicated that they would vote against South Africa's application.[21] This shifting and disruptive nature of the disagreement regarding developments that were occurring throughout the Commonwealth was indicative of the problems surrounding any potential unified agreement – especially on an issue as onerous as external defence. The continuation of bilateral arms agreements and geostrategic concerns shared by the UK and South Africa, especially over the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope, was devastating to the Commonwealth's potential for collaborative endeavours. This could not have come at a worse time for South African-Commonwealth military relations. The tenuous connection that had held in place from the 1950s onwards through a combination of research and procurement arrangements, and base treaties, was now seriously threatened. All of these arrangements also came under strain as a result of UN sanctions. Stronger wording of resolutions, and more demanding obligations on UN states against South Africa became the norm.[22] The international reaction to South Africa's internal policies was a major factor in disturbing the overall progression of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The international reaction to South Africa's domestic policies undermined and hampered any existing enduring Commonwealth military connection. This, in turn, further destabilized the cohesiveness of Commonwealth military activities by eroding the opinion of the new Commonwealth of South Africa.

---

[21] Cabinet Conclusions 11 February 1961 RG 25 volume 6176 file 50085-J-40 LAC. Also see conclusions of 25 February and 5 March of the same file. Although Canada would ultimately decide in favour of declining South African re-admittance this was far from an easy decision.

[22] General Assembly Resolution 1762 6 November 1962 A/RES/1761(XVII) called for a voluntary embargo and boycott, especially of arms. This would be followed a a series of Security Council resolutions. Specifically Security Council Resolution 191 18 June 1964 S/RES/190 (1964), would be followed by Security Council Resolution 282 23 July 1970 S/RES/282 (1970) which reiterated its arms embargo after concerns were raised over ongoing violations.

Although the rapid expansion of the Commonwealth did not get fully under way until the early to mid-1960s the circumstances which led to the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth had been put in motion from as early as 1957. Ghana was admitted instantly into the Commonwealth in that year, making it the first African state to join the Commonwealth outside of South Africa itself. Nigeria joined later in October 1960.[23] Sierra Leone became independent earlier that same year in April.[24] In that regard it is important to note that the majority of African states which were admitted over the course of the 1960s exerted no direct pressure on South Africa that led to its withdrawal. Instead, the states which indicated that they would not approve of South Africa's renewed entry (following its conversion to a republic – itself a topic of discussion that is far too involved to be dealt with here) consisted of the Asian member states and, of course, Canada.[25]

Crucial to this development is the shift in what was considered the moral, if perhaps not legal, competencies of the Commonwealth as a whole. In that respect the reasons behind the indications that were made to South Africa regarding its renewed membership of the Commonwealth was illustrative of the type of criteria that the Commonwealth countries were now beginning to apply on an ad-hoc basis to current and prospective members. The mere fact that the internal policies of another member state were considered legitimate grounds for objection was a monumental step forward in what would become a set of principles that were espoused by the Commonwealth in written form in later years. Prior to the *de facto* ejection of South Africa in 1961, the internal workings or actions of another state had not been a serious block on membership, even where such activities were objectionable.[26] In fact the Commonwealth as an organisation had shown a remarkable willingness, both before and after, to

[23] It should be pointed out that the rapid expansion of the Commonwealth, particularly in these earlier years were built on long-standing, if ultimately flawed and poor, attempts at drafting an internal political process. In Nigeria especially attempts to handle Nigerian nationalism so that it was funnelled towards political ends had been in process since 1935. The multitude of failed and constantly amended constitutions from both the UK and those arising from popular consultation in Nigeria reflected the difficulty involved in ensuring a stable and reliable progression from dependent territory to self-government or independence. - R.D. Pearce, 'Governors, Nationalists, and Constitutions in Nigeria 1935-51' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 9 (1981) p 304

[24] The independence of Sierra Leone had, however, been known and discussed during the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference of 1960. - Commonwealth Conference Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 8-17 March 1961 Final Communique Annex II RG 27 Volume 21577 File 2-5020-2 LAC

[25] It is interesting to note that Canada had offered a reassurance that South Africa was a welcome member of the Commonwealth earlier in May 1960. Canada, as well as the UK, Australia and New Zealand had offered that assurance. The Canadian position, however, was already indicated to be more complicated than a blanket acceptance even at that stage. Mr. Diefenbaker outlined that he would not 'be party to a decision [offering a reassurance that South Africa would be a welcome member of the Commonwealth should it reform its government into a republic] which would affect the mind of the South African voter on an internal matter'. In fact the Conference as a whole, declined to offer South Africa the assurance it requested. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

either adapt or ignore a whole variety of fundamentally repulsive elements on that basis. Religious strife during and following the partition of the British Raj never received much attention nor consideration for the inclusion of its respective successor states into the Commonwealth.[27] Violence and discrimination relating to cultural and ethnic divisions in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malaysia, and Nigeria were also never seriously considered as grounds for non-admittance.[28]

The introduction of a concept which allowed for the judgement of a member state by the rest of the Commonwealth for the purposes of admission was firmly established after 1961.[29] What could, and could not, be overlooked based on any such individual or collective vested interests laid the foundation for a more discerning Commonwealth. It is ironic that the protections which had been created by the Commonwealth in terms of limiting the potential for interference by a member state (notably the UK) into the internal affairs of other member states throughout the first half of the twentieth century were discarded and such potential interference reintroduced by its newer members (if only on a selective basis that favoured themselves).[30] Although this must be seen in the light of increasingly pervasive international pressure it is nevertheless indicative of the start of the conversion of the Commonwealth into an international body with more interest in selective morality than in the activities that same organisation had conducted in previous decades.[31] The repercussions that this process had for

[26] Indeed it had been the convention in the Commonwealth 'not to discuss matters that were in dispute between members of the Commonwealth.' - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

[27] This was hardly an issue of which the British were unaware either, with serious concerns relating to the division in the Raj on a religious basis being known for decades prior to independence. Furthermore, actions taken to ensure more involved participation by the British Raj during the war resulted in British actions which actively promoted this division. Although the intent was almost certainly not to further complicate the religious divide and post-war difficulties its net effect was precisely that. - G. Rizvi, 'Transfer of Power in India: A Restatement of an Alternative Approach' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) p 141

[28] Significant difficulties persisted in Nigeria relating to its constitution and extraordinary difference between the north and south of the country. - M. Lynn, 'The Nigerian Self-Government Crisis of 1953 and the Colonial Office' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34 (2006) p 256

[29] This was, Macmillan believed, a symptom of these new countries being 'very young and very inexperienced' in that they had 'an itch to interfere not only with the affairs of the older countries but with each others.' - Letter from Macmillan to Menzies 8 February 1962 PREM 11 T51/62 UKNA

[30] Menzies' observations of the degradation of the political structures of new member states found agreement with his British counterpart. In Menzies reply to Macmillan he described Ghana as 'a ruthless dictatorship, with no rule of law... with not one shred of the historical British institutional sense [remaining], while 'Ceylon seems to be a mess of neo-Marxist pottage'. -Letter from Menzies to Macmillan 18 April 1962 PREM11 T211A/62 UKNA

[31] Indeed it was regarded that the Commonwealth was 'becoming a sort of miniature UN, with various groups; the Afro-Asian strength strongly organized, and the older members not knowing quite how to handle it.' - Letter from Macmillan to Menzies 8 February 1962 PREM 11 T51/62 UKNA. Although this was couched in a letter filled with racist tones (even going so far as to consider the 'barbarism' of Germany the result of a the failure of the Romans to cross the Elbe) it nevertheless highlights the way in which the older members of the Commonwealth (though notably not Canada who 'would not agree' with such thoughts) thought of the new direction of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth defence cooperation were drastic, and the first shots of this transformation had been fired with the withdrawal of South Africa on 31 May 1961.

Although the withdrawal of South Africa certainly complicated matters previously agreed defence arrangements, particularly with respect to the naval base at Simonstown, were not unduly affected.[32] The continued use of port facilities throughout the 1960s, arms sales, and the cooperative approach to the defence of the sea route between the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean remained stable. The perseverance of normal operations with respect to joint Anglo-South African defence cooperation in this matter was one of the earliest examples of how previously established Commonwealth defence cooperation survived the transformation process of the Commonwealth more generally.[33] The overall development of the more limited version of such cooperative efforts is broadly in line with joint Commonwealth operations elsewhere.

More troubling to the Commonwealth connection was that South Africa had been steadily reducing its contribution to anything remotely resembling a Commonwealth endeavour following the end of the Second World War. Indeed, outside of the defence of its sea lanes and holdover procurement agreements with the UK it had by 1961 almost entirely extricated itself. What remained was far from the exemplary level and style of coordination and cooperation that had previously been undertaken.[34] By 1961 South African military engagement with the Commonwealth had been reduced to the point where it was effectively non-existent. Some of this decline can be attributed to the hostile political situation in South Africa itself. Interest in the Commonwealth, even the UK, in the sale of new ships

---

[32] 'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the UK June 1955' Part I MV 190 Simonstad SANDFA

[33] It would be incorrect, however, to assume that it did so completely unscathed. Aside from the obvious difficulties there were concerns expressed repeatedly over the language to be used in the document, particularly in relation to the different arrangements that would apply to the naval base when at war. The final report of the joint working party surrounding the agreement made it clear that 'war' as it was used in the final agreement was only to apply to a conflict 'in which the Union is involved.' In essence the possibility of a return to a British-led organisation of the defence of the waters surrounding South Africa was only possible in a case where both the UK and the Union of South Africa were co-belligerents. Gone was the blanket reassurance of access to the base that the British had previously enjoyed when they were managing the base directly. - 'Report of the Joint Working Part on RN/SAN cooperation' 18 June 1955 MV 190 Simonstad SANDFA

[34] This was, in fact, one of the reasons why there was such little upset in South Africa following its departure from the Commonwealth. South African interest in Commonwealth members outside of the UK had dwindled to nought where it had ever existed, and there was a reasonably expectation that the UK's economic ties would continue for as long as was possible given the situation at the UN regardless of whether South Africa was a member of the Commonwealth or not. - R. Hyam, 'The Parting of Ways: Britain and South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth 1951-61' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26 (1988) p 172

and aircraft to South Africa fell, and as a result encouraged the growth of a domestic armaments industry that threatened future sales. Furthermore, local concerns that did not more broadly interest the majority of the members of the Commonwealth, from a military perspective, began to come to the fore. The South African border wars held little or no interest for the Commonwealth and were not something which were considered of strategic interest to the Commonwealth. Although arguably the protection of the South African state itself was of interest to the Commonwealth, the protection of the external borders of the state had since the late 1950s moved towards a regional, rather than a global, perspective which was not conducive to shared Commonwealth defensive interests.[35] Throughout the decade the UK undertook significant deployments to South-East Asia and faced an increasingly difficult and hostile transit route through the Suez. Here, however, we see a limit of cooperation with the Commonwealth restricted to those nations which took an interest in South Africa's immediate interests, and even this would eventually cave under the extraordinary weight of international pressure being brought against the South African state.[36]

Although the South African border war was not representative of either the existing style of Commonwealth cooperative engagements nor indicative of any new potential developments the war is noteworthy for its operation in conjunction with a local imperial power that was more significantly attached to the development of its holdings than most others, Portugal, and the lack of Commonwealth involvement.[37] One of the key outcomes of that war was that the South African military-industrial complex was obliged to place an increased reliance on domestic resources and materiel. As the decade wore on South African involvement with Portugal became formalized, eventually even including Rhodesia in the Alcora agreement of 1970.[38] In effect this was a variant on the regional defence arrangement similar in purpose to other regional defence initiatives that had seen patchy participation

[35] Note though that the UK still retained interest itself in the territorial integrity of South Africa, especially as they related to the sealanes around the Cape of Good Hope.

[36] A. Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999) p 119

[37] See – J. Darwin, 'Diplomacy and Decolonisation' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28 (2000) p 20. Although the end result was much the same, the decline of Portugal's empire was significantly slower and these lingering elements of imperial strength were the basis on which South African-Portuguese cooperation were developed. It is worth noting that Portugal was far from well-liked by the new members of the Commonwealth, and indeed had a particularly frosty relationship with both the UK and the US when it came to discussing its imperial policies. - G. Stone, 'Britain and the Angolan Revolt of 1961' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27 (1999) p 132

[38] There had been earlier attempts to form a pan-African defensive arrangement including the UK, South Africa, Portugal, and France which would be under a single authority much like NATO or SEATO. However, they were ultimately discarded as impractical given the size of the region and that problems particular to one area were 'different from that in the remainder of the Region.' - Report of the Naval Representatives at the Conference held at Cape Town 5 September 1958 MV 128/11 NAVO Maneuvers SANDFA

amongst the Commonwealth. The Alcora Agreement was a South African-led arrangement supported by Rhodesia in which it operated for the benefit of regional strategic goals in conjunction with immediate local powers. It was an arguably successful demonstration of regionally-based defence relationships in what could be seen to effectively amount to a Commonwealth context.

Indeed there is a greater correlation in the style, form, and purpose of Commonwealth defence cooperation before 1960 with the Alcora Agreement than there is between Commonwealth defence cooperation before 1960 and what eventually manifested for the Commonwealth in 1981. That the basis of the cooperative effort between South Africa and Rhodesia was not dissimilar to the form and style of older Commonwealth initiatives is as apparent as the fact that this arrangement was not a declared Commonwealth endeavour. The extensive use of a larger power for arms, technological cooperation and the pursuit of common strategic interests in securing immediate regional military goals are all hallmarks of the kind of activity undertaken by the Commonwealth throughout most of its existence prior to 1960. In many ways what developed in Southern Africa in the absence of a Commonwealth title for such activities represented an intriguing possibility as to the potential that remained for Commonwealth military initiatives.

South Africa and the UN

Before returning to the developments across the Commonwealth over the 1960s it is worthwhile to note the broader international reaction to South Africa's apartheid policy. Although the expansion of the Commonwealth, even before 1960, had already made its mark felt on South Africa there is another area in which the connection to other Commonwealth member states was undermined. South Africa had traditionally, like the vast majority of other Commonwealth countries until the late 1960s/early 1970s, relied extensively on British and/or other Commonwealth arms suppliers, research developments, and technology.[39] However, with the advent of a series of UN resolutions on non-mandatory (and subsequently mandatory) arms embargo against South Africa that connection and uniformity of weapons between South Africa and the rest of the Commonwealth was broken.[40]

The primary driving factors behind the arms embargo were quite clear. The international ire that apartheid had evoked ultimately saw the imposition of the first arms embargo against South Africa in

[39] General Meeting of the Federal Executive Committee of the Navy League of South Africa'. 19 October 1962 MV 203 Die Vlootbond van Suid-Afrika SANDFA

1963.[41] In total almost a dozen resolutions were passed against South Africa in the UN between 1960 and 1971 all directly attributable to their apartheid policy. The arms embargo covered an increasing number of military goods eventually before culminating in a mandatory arms embargo in 1977. Although this may suggest a possible continuation of arms arrangements between South Africa and the UK until 1977 that was not the case.[42] International and Commonwealth pressure had made such arrangements difficult. The effect of these 'voluntary' arms embargoes was most notably seen in that by 1977 the South African arms industry was rather well-developed. The voluntary embargoes were so effective that it is debatable whether the mandatory embargo put any additional pressure on South Africa.[43] As South Africa could no longer acquire their military equipment from existing sources, which were invariably British, there was an increased divergence in the ordnance and equipment utilised by South Africa which continued from 1960 onwards.[44] Notable in particular was the domestic

---

[40] Interestingly there seemed some debate in the UK over whether they would continue to supply South Africa with military stores. A report issued to the South African Secretary for External Affairs declared that it received various different responses depending on which Department in the UK it approached. The Defence Department was 'happy to sell anything which South Africa wished to buy', as was The Trade department (presumably a shorthand for the Board of Trade). The Admiralty informally expressed its view that every application for purchase of arms was treated on its individual merits. Meanwhile the Commonwealth Relations Office responded, albeit under a condition that the official in question was not quoted on the matter, that a request to purchase more armoured vehicles would greatly embarrass the British government. - Report for the Secretary of External Affairs: Supply of Military Equipment to South Africa 14 December 1960 MV 132 Aankoop van Wapentuig SANDFA

[41] The embargo against South Africa was met with negative reaction in some quarters of the Commonwealth. Australia's delegation to the UN, for instance, voted against the proposed embargo in its earliest stages in late 1962. - 'Continuation of Minute for the Secretary of Foreign Affairs 21 November 1962' – 30 November 1962 MV103/1 Australiese-Aangeleenthede MV/EF 125 SANDFA

[42] It is notable, however, that the Simonstown Agreement included detailed provisions to ensure that the provision of local employment at the naval base would not bar recruitment of non-Europeans, nor offer lower pay, discriminate on that basis in terms of recruitment, and they would have the same security of tenure in their employment as others of comparable role as a European would enjoy. Although it was clear that apartheid and international condemnation would not dissuade the UK from seeking to secure its strategic position the particulars of its arrangements with respect to South Africa did take such concerns into account. -'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the UK June 1955' Enclosure to Letter from Selwyn Lloyd to Erasmus Minister of Defence 30 June 1955 MV 190 Simonstad SANDFA

[43] Indeed even before the voluntary arms embargoes trade with South Africa had been in decline, resulting in the development of an unfavourable balance of payments. The Canadian government suspected that the primary cause behind this was the hike in British interest rates to four and a half percent in 1954, but went on to note that 'the government's constitutional legislation [regarding voting practices] also played a small but important part in the outflow'. - Memorandum by Evans (Canadian Trade Commissioner in Cape Town) for Gill, Canadian High Commissioner to South Africa, 23 February 1954 RG 25 Volume 3558 File 1039 A-40 LAC

[44] The level of South African dependence on the UK for the supply of its ships and accompanying elements required to maintain a fleet was expressed in no uncertain terms by Sir Herbert Packer, who had served as Commander-in-Chief South Atlantic Station until his retirement 1953 and subsequently retired to Cape Town, South Africa. In an address to the Navy League of South Africa he outlined how continued cooperation between the UK and South Africa was 'vital', pointing to 'the new ships of the South African Navy are being built in the UK, [and] it is from there she gets her naval weapons, ammunition and specialised stores. Above all, South African officers... are instructed in British Naval Schools'. 'General Meeting of the Federal Executive Committee of the Navy League of South Africa'. 19 October 1962 MV 203 Die Vlootbond van Suid-Afrika SANDFA

development of and modifications to existing British tanks. The various trade restrictions to South Africa had, both from a technical and strategic standpoint, significantly informed matters that occurred thereafter. As such, it may prove beneficial at this stage to explore the developments that the new members of the Commonwealth had on the organisation of the Commonwealth as a whole and how this negatively affected the possibility and potential of Commonwealth military cooperation, of any sort, after 1961.

Structural change in the Commonwealth

The volatile international situation, in part spurred on by the relatively rapid decolonisation programme and the resultant expansion of the Commonwealth, was not met with an equally vigorous and dynamic readjustment in the system of organisation within the Commonwealth prior to its expansion. The effort to pre-empt problems in the various territories and colonies of the British empire through decolonisation was, largely, not extended to include dealing with the potential problems that emerged after their admission into the Commonwealth. There had been a reasonably well-established belief that the Commonwealth would serve as a continuation of British influence yet little action was taken to ensure that this would be the case.[45] The arrangements for decolonisation in the main attempted to assure the inclusion of new states to the Commonwealth rather than provide any direction for what might happen after they were admitted.[46] Whether this was intentional or not the net effect was that there was no comparable concerted effort to ensure the stability nor continuation of the style and form of the Commonwealth following the influx of new states.

The changes that transformed the Commonwealth have their origin in that first early intake of new states in the early 1960s. The particulars of this transformation were not clear until the mid-1960s, and specifically from 1964. The Commonwealth as an international organisation adapted itself to the new situation, leaving little room for a continuation of how affairs had been conducted previously. Perhaps most alarmingly for those who desired a continuation of Commonwealth cooperation as it had previously been implemented, these changes and adjustments to the Commonwealth's political

[45] Part of this might be attributable to the issue that, by the time the Commonwealth was expanding, the concept of the use of the Commonwealth as a vehicle for the preservation of British influence had been much maligned. - A.F. Madden, 'Not for export: The Westminster Model of Government and British Colonial Practice' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979) p. 23

[46] This argument would be carried over into considerations relating to the inclusion of small states into the Commonwealth. See Report: The Constitutional Development of the Commonwealth 23 June 1960 CAB 133/200 UKNA

structure were driven by the new states.[47] This often resulted in a general reluctance amongst the older members of the Commonwealth to readily agree to such new structures despite the clear and obvious need for some new method of organisation. Even in this, what should have been a relatively benign aspect of the growth of the Commonwealth developed into a divide between the older and newer countries which was not conducive to the pursuit of joint activities, particularly of a military nature, which the Commonwealth had previously undertaken. Despite these internal arguments progress continued by sheer weight of interest and numbers. By the turn of the decade the expansion of the Commonwealth was largely complete, as were the structural changes to the Commonwealth. The result was that it would be another decade before a fresh joint military operation was undertaken under a Commonwealth flag. It was clear that internal Commonwealth developments were spearheaded by new member states, agreed to by the older member states with reluctance, and such was the course of developments that they crippled any potential deployment of a Commonwealth military operation in the style that had seen reasonably frequent use and been relatively successful in earlier decades.

These internal Commonwealth developments, and internal developments in the British Empire with respect to the impending independence of African, Asian and other states, territories and colonies, were enacted, unsurprisingly, in response to domestic and international pressure across the various member states and their subordinate territories. A general trend of growing nationalist fervour of debatable application to vast swathes of imperial territory, coupled with increasing unrest, uncertain finances, potential Communist infiltration and global aversion to anything that could be labelled as imperial, left the UK in a particularly precarious position.[48] The Winds of Change speech noted a key turning point in the internal timetables the British Colonial Office had established for eventual independence.[49] The use of the Commonwealth as a means of preserving British influence was an oft-stated goal, although how, precisely, this was intended to be effected never seems to have been

[47] Indeed many of the changes sought by the New Commonwealth had been actively rejected by the older members of the Commonwealth as they saw this as a potential organ of a resumption of centralised control of their affairs. Canada, South Africa, and the Irish Free State, for instance, all objected to proposals for a Secretariat between 1931 and 1947 on this basis. JDB. Miller, *The Commonwealth and the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) p 43 & p 79

[48] Whitehall, and particularly the Colonial Office, struggled to address these issues on their usual basis which in turn prompted internal reform of the Colonial Office as it related to security and intelligence issues. See R. Cormac, 'A Whitehall showdown? Colonial Office-Joint Intelligence Committee Relations in the mid 1950s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39 (2011) p 250

[49] At the Commonwealth Conference of 1960 the Colonial Secretary of the UK described 'tersely, confidently, and without nostalgia the hurried programme for turning the African colonies loose in the world'. It was clear, not only to the UK but also made clear to the rest of the Commonwealth, that there was a rush being put on the transfer of power in territories. - Prime Ministers Conference May 1960 – Personal Note by Secretary of External Affairs 'The Future Commonwealth Relationship' A5954 box 1799 ANA

considered or implemented in any detail.

Regardless, the Commonwealth at the turn of the 1960s was not an organisation fit for the purpose of managing, organising, and directing a multinational military effort on any significant scale. There was no internal secretary, and both the position and accompanying staff had been previously considered and rejected.[50] There was no coordinated means of cooperation outside of a few technical organisations and points of contact for professional and service liaisons. It was, notwithstanding these limitations, directly responsible for the preservation of British influence in new states which were previously administered as British territories and colonies. Leaving aside the dubious political gains to be made by such ventures and instead focusing on the military aspects of such goals it must be said that there was substantial British success. New member states typically permitted the deployment of British ground forces, ships and planes as required at military facilities that had previously housed similar British forces.[51] The increased number of these temporary bases compared to the availability of bases which were not under similar restrictions caused difficulties in the coordination and organisation of British forces overseas. Extravagant plans to deal with this, including an expanded airbase at RAF Gan to secure a new air route from the UK towards the Far East, and full-fledged bases in north-western Australia and in Kenya, emphasised two crucial elements.[52] First, that there was still a significant interest in the use and establishment of overseas bases. Second, that the integrity of these bases, with respect to national vetoes and non-interference with British operations, was fundamentally unsound.[53] The series of complications at British and Australian bases in Malaysia are key examples in the inability to avoid these kinds of problems even in a region where such cooperative efforts were active and, comparatively, successful.[54] As such, the relinquishment of such huge swathes of territory from the British Empire generated a great deal of doubt with respect to future military potential and supply zones that remained uncertain for the remainder of the decade.

---

50 Minute by Chadwick 9 January 1957 DO 35/5001 UKNA

51 The list of applicable treaties that demonstrate this is too long to be usefully included here. It is more practical to refer to the British policy which advocated that the retention of military bases was essential for British global strategy. - COS(54)332 9 July 1953 & COS(54)336 11 July 1953 both are in DEFE 5/47 UKNA

52 D. Percox, *Britain, Kenya, and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security, and Decolonisation* (London: Taurus Academic Studies, 2004) p 185

53 Such difficulties would become increasingly apparent in Kenya from 1952 onward with the declaration of the Kenya Emergency in response to the Mau Mau rebellion and a persistent inability to forcibly end such unrest. The long-terms prospects for a major military establishment created in that context were far from ideal. - F.Furedi, 'Creating a Breathing Space: The Political Management of Colonial Emergencies' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993) p 103

In the absence of any internal defence organisation and planning in the Commonwealth it is unsurprising that those who created this infrastructure influenced the type and style of such organisations that eventually developed. Throughout the 1960s there was a flurry of activity as new countries of the Commonwealth flexed their newfound diplomatic powers to create or redesign, Commonwealth-centric, developmental aid and support organisations and programmes. Several of these organisations had their roots in pre-war development and cooperation schemes, such as the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, which was later re-branded and expanded into the Association of Commonwealth Universities in 1963. Although initial progress was slow, such endeavours coalesced into the formation of a systemic structure that was quite different to the pre-1960s Commonwealth.[55]

Two of the more significant structural organisations that were to develop in the 1960s were the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The expansion of the Commonwealth with the associated political issues that this provoked drove support for the Secretariat in the early 1960s before being proposed by Ghana, Uganda, and Trinidad.[56] It is important to note that the duties of the Secretariat itself were not, entirely, new. Most of the organisational work with respect to the organisation of meetings and so on had been carried out by the Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) in the UK. The removal of the powers of the CRO over the Commonwealth established an independent Commonwealth based and operated organisational body that would ultimately be responsible as the primary means of intergovernmental organisation and communication within the Commonwealth.[57] By contrast the Commonwealth Foundation, an idea proposed by the UK, focused on more traditional avenues of Commonwealth cooperation – advocating the organisation and communication of arts, scientific and technological progress and the spread of ideas throughout the Commonwealth.[58] Insofar as British efforts at reorganizing the Commonwealth during this period are concerned they would

[54] Issues had plagued Commonwealth cooperation in the region even from the start of the whole endeavour. Early indications that the issues raised by the Malayans regarding the wording of the document being a way to mollify internal political opinion of the arrangement and that it would have no bearing on the substance of the arrangement were shown to be entirely incorrect. Although this would not end the endeavour it did weaken its final form and oblige a level of political interaction regarding military manoeuvres in the region that were not expected. - Prime Ministers Conference Supplement No. 1 to Defence Brief Working Party on Malayan Defence Agreement 18 June 1956 A5954 box 1799 ANA

[55] D. McIntyre, 'Britain and the Creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28 (2000) p 154

[56] D. McIntyre, 'The Unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conferences 1933-59: Precursors of the Tri-Sector Commonwealth' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36 (2008) p 608

[57] Further detail on the specifics of the development of the Secretariat can be found in M. Doxey, *The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Contemporary Commonwealth* (New York: Springer Ltd, 1989)

[58] Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers 1962 – Final Communique PREM 11/3652 UKNA

appear difficult to reconcile with their stated aims. The establishment of the Secretariat directly reduced the UK's influence over the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Foundation was a particularly weak substitute. That the older members of the Commonwealth had sought a Secretariat was well known, and it is notable in that regard that the first Secretary-General was a Canadian.[59] However, by the time the Secretariat was established the prevailing possibilities for military cooperation within the Commonwealth were problematic given the variety of internal and international issues that had arisen since 1947. In essence, even though the Secretary had been a position that members of the Commonwealth, Old and New, had desired, the political outlook had changed drastically and skewed its subsequent direction in a way that may not have been possible had such a position existed prior to the expansion of the Commonwealth.

The position the Commonwealth, particularly its new members, found themselves in at the turn of the decade was an enviable one. They had gained their independence, were key members of a large international organisation that they had helped design, an organisation which included its own independent staff and supporting infrastructure. They had demonstrated their ability to dictate Commonwealth policy and had established that the internal policies of a Commonwealth country were open to scrutiny.

Militarily the implication of the changed nature of the Commonwealth was that it was largely ignored. This was in spite of the serious problems decolonisation posed for the UK's armed forces. The process not only added to the increased draw on limited resources, but destabilised the basing rights and logistical support on which the UK would have otherwise enjoyed globally. Indeed, the logistic situation had deteriorated to such a point that the withdrawal of the UK from South-East Asia in 1972 was hardly surprising.[60] Leaving aside domestic issues and financial difficulties the changing face of the international political situation left the UK largely unable to provide the necessary basic infrastructure to which it was accustomed. The establishment of 'Commonwealth' military formations and initiatives became increasingly complicated. The expansion of the Commonwealth increased the reluctance of the Commonwealth as a collective whole to engage in such cooperative operations.

[59] D. McIntyre, 'Canada and the Creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat 1965' *International Journal* 53 (1998) p 769

[60] This is especially true for the UK, which became obsessed with attempts to predict the state of affairs in 1970 in the early 1960s. It was foremost in the minds of the government in 1961 and resulted in a series of plans for various eventualities that were drawn up by both service personnel, political figures, and civil servants. - Memorandum by the Prime Minister 'Our Foreign and Defence Policy for the Future' 29 September 1961 PREM11 UKNA

Furthermore the establishment of a Secretariat and an increasingly formalised Commonwealth organisation necessarily obliged a more cautious approach to the public use of the Commonwealth title in the nomenclature of military forces. There were few difficulties using the term 'Commonwealth' when the organisation lacked a centralised structure which could object. There was an almost cavalier attitude taken to the use of the Commonwealth name until 1972. It should hardly be surprising that, during the expansion of the Commonwealth, that greater interest was expressed in organisations which bore its name. The justification for assigning the title of 'Commonwealth' to a military formation if it only involved a mere fraction of the actual Commonwealth and was not granted sanction by the central administration of that that organisation. The practical expression of this can be seen in the name change from the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group to the 28th ANZUK Brigade in 1971. This was a change in nomenclature only. The 'new' Brigade performed, in a very real sense, exactly the same as it did before the change until it was disbanded in 1974.

Conclusion

In some respects, it was the changes to the Commonwealth during these years, and particularly the reaction to those changes by Canada and South Africa, that underscore the instability of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The Canadian position in the Commonwealth was dominated by attempts to ensure its ongoing role as 'senior Dominion'. An ideological switch to peace-keeping operations instead of combat operations by Canadian military personnel also left it ill-suited to continued cooperation but extremely well-placed to take advantage of the changing international situation. This ideological alteration to the Canadian perspective was perhaps most clearly seen in the extreme reorganisation of its armed forces in 1968. Its traditional organisation was swept away to make way for a new wholly unified armed force that prompted a wholesale clearance of numerous senior Canadian military officials. Whereas the Canadian approach suggested a viable outlet for military endeavours for the Commonwealth, South Africa's domestic legislation was a catalyst for this new Commonwealth. It laid the foundation for a Commonwealth built on selective moral standing as defined by its new membership.

It is also important to consider that these developments struck at the heart of the integrity of the Old Commonwealth organisational and cooperative structures. The Commonwealth had changed in function so drastically that it was now a vehicle for internal censure. This was a complete *volte-face* in

the aims and intent of the Commonwealth, but it was one which laid the basis for future Commonwealth defence cooperation in the form of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force.

The reaction in Canada, South Africa, and the New Commonwealth to changed circumstances in the Commonwealth is but half the story. The following chapter details the rather different experience that Australia, New Zealand, and the UK encountered over the period. The 28th Brigade (Commonwealth & ANZAC) will, of course, be revisited. The Canadian and South Africa experiences while so vastly different to one another resulted in a remarkably similar withdrawal from Commonwealth military activity. That these two states were driven by the political changes in an international sense, especially with respect to the new member states of the Commonwealth, was readily apparent. The Canadian political establishment's fascination with peace-keeping and on ensuring its role as senior Dominion in the Commonwealth, in practice if not in name, necessarily obliged its hesitancy in undertaking future Commonwealth military commitments that might threaten its position on either front. The issues South Africa faced speak for themselves and the strategic priority of its sea lanes to the UK seemed unable to counter the weight of international and domestic pressure in the UK for very long. Indeed British basing rights in Simonstown were to end in 1975[61] and by the time they might be of some use, in the Falklands war in 1981, South Africa denied the UK access to the port. In effect the slow and steady withdrawal from Commonwealth military commitments that had been happening in the previous decade as a result of a reorientation to a more regional approach was further sundered by the growth of problematic international pressure and domestic peculiarities in both Canada and South Africa.

This is the prism through which the events of the next chapter will be considered. The UK and the Antipodean Dominions responded very differently to the challenges posed on the international and Commonwealth stages during the 1960s. What effort was expended in ensuring a limited success and growth of a more broadly based cooperative effort to Commonwealth military activity highlighted the clear potential for such operations that were ultimately undermined by a combination of regional re-orientations and a split in the Old Commonwealth only partly attributable to that reorientation and much more to internal Commonwealth machinations. The journey from that position to what eventually became the remnants of this older style of joint Commonwealth military cooperation were made all the

[61] P.J. Henshaw, 'The Transfer of Simonstown: Afrikaner Nationalism, South African Strategic Dependence, and British Global Power' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 3 (1992) p 440

more curious by the eventual re-introduction of 'official' Commonwealth military cooperation in the 1980s in very different circumstances from the problems and directions faced by South Africa and Canada in the 1960s.

Chapter four: Australia, New Zealand, and UK defence cooperation, 1960-71

Introduction

This chapter details how Australia, New Zealand, and the UK responded to the impediments placed on Commonwealth defence cooperation throughout the 1960s. It examines the importance of securing US participation in defence matters, especially for Australia and New Zealand, and presents how such participation became an increasingly important and more viable alternative to Commonwealth defence cooperation. It highlights how New Zealand pursued a similar peace-keeping strategy to Canada but that its operations were more focused on what might be considered 'Commonwealth' interests. Finally it notes the reduced – both relative and absolute – capabilities of the UK and the implications this had for Commonwealth defence cooperation generally. It addresses these problems while noting the endurance of Commonwealth defence cooperation during the period. It argues that all three countries sought to maintain a strong defence relationship with the US, albeit to varying degrees. It also suggests that Commonwealth interest in South-East Asia was significant, and it was one of the only regions in which the Commonwealth defence relationship not only succeeded in its basic aims but became a distinct pillar of Commonwealth engagement and activity during the period. This argument is explored in the chapter by detailing key purchases of military hardware. It also considers the changes to the regional strategic situation both as a result of increased local interest and a reduced interest in the defence of far-flung territories by the UK and the US. It details the indecision and unclear solutions to the UK's fundamental difficulties in maintaining remote military deployments given immediate financial and political problems. It highlights the implications of 'Confrontation' between the UK and Indonesia on future Commonwealth defence engagements in South-East Asia. Finally it concludes by providing some context to the preservation of Commonwealth engagement in South-East Asia, and particularly the technological and political limitations that contributed to that development.

Whereas military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth, at least with respect to Canadian and South African participation, was dominated by the global political situation and domestic and regional security issues respectively, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK developed under rather different circumstances. They were subject to pressures that focused on their own regional cooperation in South-East Asia and an all-pervasive desire to include the US in their military endeavours with the

intended aim of lightening the burden placed on their armed forces and exchequers.[1] A number of distinct and seriously threatening challenges to ongoing Commonwealth defence cooperation emerged to between 1960 and 1971. Although it survived the decade intact numerous changes within the Commonwealth, and individually in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK prompted change in how Commonwealth defence cooperation was conducted. As pointed out in previous chapters joint defence efforts were an ongoing process that reacted to developments in the global political situation. The Middle East Defence Conference and the 1st Commonwealth Division were examples of a broader response to Commonwealth defence cooperation, and in many ways the alterations made to Commonwealth defence cooperation in South-East Asia continued that trend, albeit in a more localised context.

Perhaps the single largest contributing factor to change was the reduced attention paid to the region by the UK and the US. There had been a steady reduction of UK forces overseas from 1963 onwards. This reached such a low point that it culminated in a declaration of withdrawal from 'East of the Suez' (technically east of Aden, but a withdrawal from Aden had been already underway by the time of the announcement) in November 1971. This caused grave concern amongst Britain's allies.[2] In addition to the UK withdrawal from South-East Asia some attention must be given to US activities in the region. Australian and New Zealand foreign and defence policies had emphasised the necessity of US support and of a “Forward Defence” for the Australian continent (and by extension the islands of New Zealand) even prior to British withdrawal.[3] In fact, the British withdrawal at the beginning of the following decade took place in a context of a concerted and well substantiated diplomatic push to strengthen the US presence in the region. The irony, of course, was that the British withdrawal from South-East Asia came on the foot of the US's reluctance to be involved in the region. A reluctance which had been committed to policy following the announcement of its Guam doctrine in late July 1969. The combination of the two policy changes prompted a complete redesign of active military cooperation in South-East Asia which, until the late 1960s, had been characterised by regional defence arrangements actively supported by the UK. The withdrawal of the UK and the US was mirrored in

1 This often went so far as to reveal to the US their plans for the defence of South-East Asia for review 'in light of their [US] plans for counter action'. - Letter from the Prime Minister of the UK to the High Commissioner (Australia) to the UK re: Discussion with US Authority on Defence in South-East Asia 25 April 1955 – Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference London 1956 – Defence Brief A1209 box 446 ANA

2 This included the US administration which was both against the move and warned against a public backlash in the US should the UK seem to be shirking its duties. - D. Kunz, 'Somewhat Mixed Up Together: Anglo-American Defence and Financial Policy during the 1960s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27 (1999) p 226

3 G. Woodard, *Asian Alternatives* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006), p 287

Australia and New Zealand with their own withdrawals. This turn to their immediate and localized defence had been building since the Middle East had been discarded as the focal point for the defence of the Antipodean Dominions in the mid-1950s.[4] In essence, between 1960 and 1971 was the last period of significant Commonwealth military cooperation on the scale and in the style as it had been understood since the end of the Second World War. This was not, however, a complete severance of all ties and military bonds of cooperation. Elements of cooperation persevered throughout the 1970s and beyond, although under different titles and with fewer of the structural trappings that had defined Commonwealth cooperation in the 1950s.

This chapter argues that the expansion of the Commonwealth had little negative effect on the practicalities of Anglo-Australian-New Zealand cooperation. In fact, in South-East Asia specifically it will be demonstrated that there was a comparative growth of such cooperation amongst the Commonwealth with the introduction of Malaysia and Singapore into the broader defence relationship. However, it was clear that the political and military hierarchies in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK were aware of the problems that the expanded Commonwealth posed to the continuation of this cooperation. It is suggested that the action taken in response to this came in the form of a reconsideration of the styling and nomenclature of such operations rather than a fundamental redesign of purpose and content. In other words, the enlarged Commonwealth forced a political adjustment to reflect the new reality of the Commonwealth, but the substance behind the endeavour was essentially unaffected.

It is a key argument of this thesis that what effectively amounted to Commonwealth defence cooperation remained in operation long after any claim could be made for the use of such an all-encompassing name. Whereas the weight of new developments in the Commonwealth seriously and negatively affected South Africa and Canadian participation in Commonwealth military activities, the same cannot be said of the UK, Australia, or New Zealand. The expansion of the Commonwealth, and the growing political problems, both internationally and domestically, did not have a universal effect across the 'Old Commonwealth'. In some respects, the individual circumstances of all concerned were

[4] Indeed the Australian Chief of General Staff would comment in late 1959 that it 'was absolutely inconceivable... that any Australian government could ever again contemplate sending troops to fight either in Europe or in the Middle East. The whole of the Australian effort would have to be concentrated in the neighbouring area of South-East Asia.' - Telegram no. 36/0 Officer of the High Commissioner (South Africa), Canberra to Secretary for External Affairs Pretoria 20 December 1959 MV 103/1 SANDFA

readily apparent – internal difficulties in South Africa prompted additional international political pressure, which was not as significant a factor for Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the UK. Although each had their own internal troubles (Catholic riots in Northern Ireland from 1968 to 1998,[5] the 1967 referendum and associated unrest amongst Aborigines in Australia,[6] a Maori cultural and political revival in New Zealand starting in the 1960s,[7] and the Quiet Revolution for French Quebec in Canada also beginning in the 1960s,[8]) none of these were subject to a comparable level of domestic unease or international condemnation. Similarly, Canada both pursued its own course and followed the patterns laid out for regional defence that increasingly distanced itself from any coherent collective Commonwealth interest. Although it shared the joint belief that cooperation with the Americans was vital to national and collective defence, Canada was in a position that allowed their government to take greater advantage of US interests than was possible for Australia, New Zealand, or even the UK. Canadian success in this area, undoubtedly aided by sheer proximity, furthered their split from the rest of the Commonwealth.

In one respect it is important to note that this chapter differs greatly from the preceding despite dealing with the same time period. There is a much greater overlap of some of the issues that Australia, New Zealand, and the UK faced than there was between Canada and South Africa. For instance, the importance of US assistance and engagement was a shared and the paramount concern of all three. The prevailing strategic paradigm which sought a regional approach to defence and strategic considerations, as well as the growing number of treaties which attempted to deal with the security of their respective member states on a regional basis, was also a shared interest. These interest were shared amongst Australia, New Zealand, and the UK not only in a conceptual sense, but in the practicalities of acting on those shared interests something which was often on a collaborative basis.

Throughout the period the manpower and financial backing to pursue such objectives were steadily eroded.[9] The result was that the pursuit of these interests, in conjunction with the nature of the arrangement, was met by introducing new countries into existing arrangements. Ultimately this placed

5 J. McEvoy, *The Politics of Northern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008) p 1
6 Constitutional Amendments 1965 – Referendum A4940 C4257 ANA
7 E. Durr, 'Culture as Experience' in *Belonging in Oceania: Movement, Place-Making, and Multiple Identifications* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015) p 30
8 B. Young, & J. Dickinson, *A short History of Quebec* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008) p 305
9 R.F. Holland, 'The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan 1945-63' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984) p 181

an exceptionally high demand on all participating countries, to the extent that they were only sustained by either the introduction or continuation of conscription for years after the end of the Second World War. The commitments involved, particularly for the UK which was involved in multiple regional arrangements, were difficult to manage in such economically stringent and politically unsettled times. In time, the fundamental basis on which cooperative military endeavours must take place, a global deployment of personnel and equipment, proved too arduous and expensive a task to be continued indefinitely by the UK, and its withdrawal left behind a shell of cooperation. The withdrawal of the UK from East of the Suez had a profound effect on Commonwealth defence cooperation. British engagement had been the underpinning of Commonwealth activities since its inception, and their withdrawal coupled with the changes to the membership of the Commonwealth severely curtailed operations.

Australian defence spending

Between 1960 and 1970 there was a substantial increase in Australian defence spending and a corresponding growth in capabilities throughout the decade.[10] This growth also started a trend in the increased divergence of requirements between Australia and its usual supplier of military hardware, the UK. Australian politicians and service personnel now also considered the US as a potential supplier of some of its military equipment. US influence and engagement with Australia proved to be a point of consternation for the UK following the ANZUS treaty. Although there still remained substantial ties between Australia and the UK there were a number of comparatively high profile purchases by Australia from the US that started in the 1960s. This reflected an ongoing issue, accepted in London as well, that British companies alone were no longer capable of supplying all of the equipment to meet military requirements at home and abroad. However, Australian decisions throughout the 1960s not only acted on that basis but went a step further and considered alternatives even where a British option to meet requirements was available.

The F-111 tactical strike aircraft is, perhaps, one of the most well known of these given its troubled development history but it is far from the only such example. The selection of the American

[10] On 22 May 1961 the Australian Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies declared an increase of roughly 20% between 1962/63 and 1963/64 with further expenditure over a six year period peaking at '£A320 million' in 66/67 but which would exclude 'any money which may be allocated later for a replacement for the Canberra bombers.' - No. 76 Savingram from British High Commissioner in Australia 'Australia Fortnightly Summary Part 1' 23 May 1963 DO 164 58

Charles F Adams class missile destroyer instead of the British designed and built County class missile destroyer was partly on the basis of preference for the American Tartar missile system, and partly on account of cost.[11]

There were differences between the two missile destroyers that made it difficult to compare the two ships. One key distinction was that the Charles F Adams class utilised a single steam-based propulsion system, whereas the County class destroyers had a combined gas and steam propulsion system. This was a major problem for the County class as far as the Royal Australian Navy were concerned. Similarly, the County destroyers were also about two thousand tonnes heavier, and required nearly double the crew to operate. The assigned role may have been the same – a missile destroyer – but their technical specifications created a difference in their associated upkeep and maintenance in terms of manpower, technical capacity, and the shipyards were markedly different.[12] The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) enquired if it was possible to produce a steam-only variant, in a list of other suggested changes. Although some of their requirements could be met, or were dropped by the RAN, a steam-only variant was not pursued.[13] The decision to purchase the US ship rather than the UK ship was unsurprising, perhaps, given the gap between what the UK offered and Australian requirements, but it was nonetheless a severe blow to defence relations as well as the UK shipbuilding industry, which in the past also included a consideration of the potential work that could be generated in other major seaports.[14]

Although the Charles F Adams class was certainly a major break for the Royal Australian Navy many other Australian naval procurements around this time were all British. These included a number of destroyer escorts, submarines, and anti-submarine helicopters: the River (British designation Leander), Oberon, and Wessex classes respectively. As such, the Australian armed forces entered the

---

[11] A. Cooper, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations: 1945-1971' *Journal of Military History* 58 (1994) p 708

[12] It is interesting to note that Commonwealth considerations with respect to the employment of shipyards scattered around the world, not only in the UK, but also in Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Malta, and Singapore were also considered in Royal Navy estimates. The political reaction that would result from insufficient work being made available to shipyards in those places was considered at both political and service levels. - Memorandum by the Admiralty Point 13 AIR 19 Defence Expenditure 1956

[13] The Royal Australian Navy advocated for the steam-only option for 'simplicity of operation'. - N. Friedman, *British Destroyers and Frigates: The Second World War and After* (Seaforth publishing, 2012) p 195

[14] Also interesting to note in this regard is the introduction of Australian modifications to British-designed ships during the period. The Type 12 frigate design submitted for construction was reworked to better suit Australian requirements while in construction in Australia. - Minute 'Type 12 Frigates' 5 August 1957 A 1049/6 5172/1/74

1960s, and continued to operate into the early 1970s, with a high proportion of British hardware with only a few elements sourced from other than their traditional supplier, even if some of those different elements constituted large portions of the defence budget. Although it is quite clear that there was a switch to greater consideration of foreign, especially US, designs and technology, the reality was that very little changed in the 1960s. Australian armed forces were almost, though not exclusively, equipped with British-designed, and typically built, hardware. Nevertheless, the door had been pushed open with the introduction of the Charles F Adams and the F-111; and throughout the 1960s there was an increased recognition of the various procurement possibilities available to Canberra.[15]

Australian strategic policy

In fact the consideration of possibilities outside of the UK was not limited solely to procurement but also extended to the different elements of Australian strategic policy during the 1960s and ultimately formed part of the basis for future Australian defence policy. The concept of 'Forward Defence' in which it was envisaged that the defence of Australia could be best guaranteed through a focus on the security and stability of the South-East Asian region was a relatively straight-forward development of the regional focus that had been gaining ground since 1947 and had dominated defence policy since the mid-1950s.

There were attempts to secure US interest in South-East Asia during the 1960s, but these failed to generate a blanket guarantee from the US despite an increasing level of inter-operability at an operational level, and engagement on a political level. This had been a much sought after replacement of the implicit guarantee that the UK had extended to Australia before 1947 when the UK had enjoyed a more favourable political and economic situation. The situation reached such a low that it led the Australian Minister of Defence to take the relatively unusual step at the time to seek 'strategic guidance from Washington', much to the chagrin of the Chief of Defence Staff in the UK.[16] The absence of any

[15] Indeed there was significant commentary made of an effort to 'standardise as far as they [the Australian government] can with the Americans' in terms of military hardware. However, in many instances where this standardisation happened it was met with similar British efforts of the same nature, making it a collective readjustment. Furthermore, in other scenarios, such as regards to the FN rifle, the Australians did not standardise with the US. So although the intention was expressed, the reality of the matter was quite different. - Minute for the Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria from the Office of the High Commissioner 'Australian Defence Policy' 17 April 1958 MV 103/1 Australiese-Aangeleenthede SANDFA

[16] The language used by the Chief of Defence Staff was evocative, categorizing the explanation of Canberra's attempt to engage the US with telegram no.1032 as employing 'offensive terms'. This prompted the preparation of a 'historical note' which covered recent Anglo-Australian-American-New Zealand relations. - Letter from S. Garner to Sir N. Pritchard 17 October 1963 DEFE 7 52/77/11 UKNAA. The historical note is in the same file.

similar level of US interest in the form of permanent bases or similar deployments was illustrative of this comparative lack of commitment to Australia.

Australia's goal of enticing UK and/or US involvement in South-East Asia played a key role in Australian defence policy. The conflicts in Malaysia and Vietnam over the course of the 1960s and beyond saw Australian contributions to both countries.[17] The ongoing uncertainty regarding the solidity of the UK and US commitment to Australia's defence in the region effectively obliged Australian involvement in UK and US activities in the region in the interest of retaining the support. The deployment to Malaysia and Vietnam reflected the ongoing concerns at both a political and service level in Australian circles. It also highlighted the multiple draws that were placed on the Australian armed forces as a result of the government's desire to retain the support of the UK and/or the US, and their inability to obtain the guarantee it desired.

The combination of UK withdrawal and the US Guam doctrine effectively ended all hope for what Australian foreign and defence policy had endeavoured to create since the end of the Second World War – a permanent security commitment of substance from either or both the UK and the US to Australia, and by extension New Zealand.[18] When that could not be secured, as was abundantly apparent by 1971, it was unsurprising that Australian defence policy shifted to focus on the immediate defence of the Australian Continent – a policy that became known as the Defence of Australia.[19]

It is important, in this context, to recognise that the Australian shift to the US in the form of their diplomatic goals, hardware procurement, and other such matters was not at odds with the general approach taken by the Commonwealth as a whole during the 1960s. In fact, important technological

---

[17] Indeed the Australian Minister for External Affairs said to the Australian Parliament even as early as 1951 that the security of South-East Asia, and particularly Malaya but also Vietnam was vital to Australia's defence – a defence which if not mounted would have the result that 'Australia itself would be directly imperilled.' - P. Edwards & G. Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in South-East Asian Conflicts* p 109. It is hardly any wonder then that, in conjunction with the countries requesting assistance – the UK and the US – that Australia would render to both a contribution.

[18] This is perhaps an unfair view, but it was one believed to be 'currently accepted in Whitehall' that both the Australians and New Zealanders were 'rather slow to accept a larger defence burden' because they would 'like to see us [the UK] maintaining our forces in South-East Asia'. - Report 18 April 1963 DO 164 POL 498/10/1 UKNA

[19] Although it was not published until 1987 the formulation of that policy and the actions upon which it was based were based on discussions and events that occurred throughout the 1970s in response to a decline in British and American activities. - K. Beazley, *The Defence of Australia 1987*

advancements emphasised the need to obtain and ensure US support for military endeavours.[20] The problems which had arisen in the previous decade concerning ANZUS notwithstanding the fundamental concept of ensuring US support had not changed in the intervening years. If anything, the Australian strategic shift at the start of the 1960s to focus closer to home rather than trying to establish or plan for a contribution to a British wider effort coincided with US policies which advocated a local, regional, defence initiative that could be supported.

It would be incorrect to assume that Australian defence strategy with its emphasis on securing US support was so single-minded in that objective that it distanced itself from cooperation with the UK, which during the 1960s still maintained an extensive, and sophisticated, military capability in the region. It was a twist of events that placed both the UK and the US in two separate wars, in South-East Asia, where neither the UK nor the US supported the other. The UK was involved in the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation between 1962 and 1966, while the US was engaged in Vietnam. Australia deployed its first forces to Vietnam in 1962.[21] This was the start of a growth in Australian contributions to both theatres throughout the 1960s. Establishing much beyond a superficial comparison would be facile, but the chronological closeness of the two wars and the divergence between the UK and the US on the issues surrounding these conflicts was demonstrative of the logical flaw in intending to win the support of either or both in the region.[22]

The Australian contribution to the Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation was based around the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve on the Malayan peninsula itself. It attracted neither the numbers nor the attention drawn to the Australian deployment to Vietnam. This was perhaps influenced by the uncertainty and suspicion with which the Australian Department of External Affairs viewed the

[20] It is interesting to note that US support in terms of ships and planes was considered more likely to be given than ground troops. During discussions with the UK in mid-1955 the American President seemed to suggest a specific guarantee of ships and planes to the region in the event of a conflict. A qualified assurance still, but an indication of the likely level and manner of support that might be expected were support to be forthcoming. In the press release which followed US officials amended the agreed text to remove specific references to sea and air forces. - Letter from the Prime Minister of the UK to the High Commissioner (Australia) to the UK re: Discussion with US Authority on Defence in South-East Asia 25 April 1955 – Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference London 1956 – Defence Brief A1209 box 446 ANA

[21] These first deployments were of Australian advisors. - R. Scigliano, 'Vietnam: A Country at War,' *Asian Survey*, 3 (1963) p 48

[22] It is interesting to note, however, that the distinction between the two conflicts was the subject of some attention in London. - Annex I to COS(63)376 18th November 1963 DEFE 7/2389 UKNA. Also, there has been some consideration of how US involvement in the region was to the detriment of British interests, specifically regarding the growth of Indonesia, which had already been demonstrated with tacit US support for Indonesian expansion into previously Dutch-held West New Guinea. - A.J. Stockwell, 'Malaysia: The Making of a Neo-colony' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26 (1998) p 153

creation of Malaysia. Malayasia was considered a 'rather transparent, intrinsically flimsy, and probably impermanent device' for solving the lingering colonial problems in Singapore and in the Borneo territories.[23]

Regardless of any political caution the practical realities of cooperation between the Anglo-Australian forces in Malaysia and American-Australian forces in Vietnam highlighted the strength of connection which still existed between Australia and the UK, and was not present to the same degree in the relationship between Australia and the US. The Australian contribution to the US effort was an initial deployment of a small team that provided training and assistance to the South Vietnamese forces.[24] This ultimately coalesced into an independent brigade-sized deployment that comprised both Australian and New Zealand troops. Relations – while cordial – were often complicated by disagreements on how to counter insurgency-style operations. The Strategic Hamlet Programme, for instance, was an issue of some debate. By contrast, Anglo-Australian operations in Malaysia were based on established forms and procedures with little practical disagreements. At a very basic level the difference between the two experiences highlighted the compatibility between British and Australian forces that continued through the 1960s. Nevertheless, this was a transformative period for the Australian military generally; doctrinal shifts, national service, new technologies and a generally more varied technological base all point to that very clearly.[25] It was also transformative in the sense that there was a growing, and practically based, non-UK-centric defence cooperation.

The 1960s was a transformative period for the Australian armed forces. It was quite unlike the Canadian approach in that it was not conducted in any kind of holistic manner. It was a piecemeal process that flirted with new notions as they arose rather than wholly committing to them. The Pentropic divisional organisation, for example, ceased in late 1964 following four years of half-hearted experimentation.[26] Although significant, these changes to the Australian Army's organisational structure were not so drastic as to affect the ability of the 1st Australian task force to absorb and become

[23] Savingram no 5 'Australian attitude towards Malaysia' from British High Commissioner in Australia to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations 19 March 1963 DO 164 UKNA

[24] B. Davies, & G. McKay, *The Men Who Persevered* (Allen & Unwin, 2005) p 9

[25] Indeed the Australian Minister of Defence would announce, on 26 November 1959, a new three-year programme on defence matters that would include the end of National Service, a 'major Army reorganisation... [and] an Army re-equipment programme... the abolition of carriers and of the Fleet Air Arm' and a variety of other measures. - Telegram No. 36/0 Office of the High Commissioner (South Africa), Canberra, to Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria 20 December 1959 MV 103 SANDFA

interoperable with the New Zealand forces deployed to Vietnam.[27]

Indeed, so much came under review and alteration in the Australian armed forces during the 1960s that it would be all too easy to assume that there was an attempt to completely rework the various aspects of the defence forces, particularly in the Australian army, to make it more amenable to US practices. This does not appear to have been the case. Indeed many of the changes which were implemented did not fundamentally alter the armed forces for any substantive period of time. The core elements of cooperation amongst Commonwealth forces were simply not threatened by these changes, nor was there anything to suggest that these changes made the Army, or any of the other services, more capable or compatible with non-Commonwealth forces.[28] So while the series of changes undertaken by the Australian armed forces during the 1960s were no doubt significant, the repercussions, in terms of potential cooperation with other countries, were minimal. The Australian armed forces, despite a growing non-Commonwealth element in its materiel and an increase in independent operations in conjunction with non-Commonwealth forces, remained very much coherent as a force inspired and built around British concepts and doctrines. Given the importance attached to the interoperability of forces, initially across the Commonwealth and subsequently outside of it, these experiments are curiously counter-productive but perhaps that helps explain the half-hearted implementation.

In addition to experiments with military organisation within certain Commonwealth countries, there were political developments taking place across the Commonwealth as well. While Australia was generally sympathetic to the existing Commonwealth model this placed them in a rather uncomfortable position. Throughout its history of relations with the Commonwealth successive Australian governments and representatives had sought a more formal method of communication amongst the countries of the Commonwealth. Although this eventually happened with the creation of the

[26] The Pentropic organisation (a Division-level organisation consisting of 5 combined arms battle groups of an infantry battalion and supporting elements) was never even universally applied to the Australian Army with their contribution to Commonwealth forces in Malaya throughout the period retaining the old tropical organisation based on three. - J. Homs & W. Morris-Jones, *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (Frank Cass Ltd, 2005) p 78

[27] I. McGibbon, *New Zealand's Vietnam War: A History of Combat, Commitment and Controversy* (Exisle Publishing, 2010) p 216

[28] New Zealand's armed forces did not conduct these experiments, yet were easily incorporated into the 1st Australian Task Force in Vietnam. Had there been more substantial changes made then there would have been serious concern as to the potential of interoperability of forces between Australian and New Zealand. This had been demonstrated, acutely, during the Korean war. The possibility of the creation of a unified UN force for Korea was dismissed early on following an examination of international contributions. It would simply have taken too long to smooth down any differences in doctrine and training to make cooperation between formations with radically different doctrines a practical solution. - S. Pichat, *A UN legion: Between Utopia and Reality* (London: Frank Cass Ltd, 2004) p 55

Secretariat, the circumstances in which it took place were very much at odds with Australia's intentions. To the extent that it would be fair to comment that the Commonwealth was divided into New and Old camps at the start of the 1960s, especially over South Africa and apartheid, Australia found itself rather firmly planted in a grouping of countries in the Commonwealth which was generally not in favour of enhanced formal cooperation.[29]

This does raise the question of how Australian military cooperation with the Commonwealth developed in light of these new changes. The introspective approach taken by South Africa was dictated by internal and external pressures. The turn to the US that dominated Canadian policy was an obvious development in reaction to the international situation. While the Australian approach initially indicated a move similar to the Canadians there are crucial differences that set it apart. Although there were numerous procurement and research options, not to mention the strong desire to secure political and military backing in the South-East Asian region from the US, there continued to exist a far more significant British and what might be termed 'Commonwealth' connection. This was, undoubtedly, aided by the prior Australian-New Zealand military cooperation which had been built upon by generations of politicians and military personnel on both sides of the Tasman sea.

New Zealand and Commonwealth defence cooperation

Indeed, it was the close military relationship between Australia and New Zealand which provided a core nucleus around which much Commonwealth military cooperation developed over the decade. New Zealand's armed forces had been a constant, if small, contribution to ongoing joint Commonwealth activity. The 1960s marked a turning point in Anglo-New Zealand defence matters much like it did for Australia. While both Australia and New Zealand shared similar strategic priorities, New Zealand had not sought to replace or augment the UK with the US in the same manner or to the same extent as Australia.

New Zealand more closely followed Canada's example throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s

[29] It is worthwhile noting here that this divide came at a time in which serious questions were being raised regarding the 'sovereign equality' of nations. In the immediate post-war period the view of successive Australia, New Zealand, and British governments was more persuaded by the idea that this represented an area or areas in domestic policies in which foreign countries could not intrude. New member states, both those to the Commonwealth and those coming into being, took a very different view. That dividing line between sovereignty and involvement in domestic affairs goes to the heart of the trouble between the two sections of the Commonwealth. - J. Battersby, 'New Zealand, Domestic Jurisdiction, and Apartheid 1945-57' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 24 (1996) p 114

with a focus on peace-keeping operations.[30] Like the UK New Zealand suffered a decline in the capabilities of its armed services during this decade as well, with a wide-scale reorganisation and reduction of all three services. The size of New Zealand's armed forces, the scale of these reductions, and the continued commitment of their military personnel and policy-makers to joint Commonwealth activity was demonstrative of the value Wellington had put on the Commonwealth military connection.

There was a consistency in the political position of New Zealand's governments throughout the 1960s where a view had formed that its security was fundamentally tied to its ability to attract the interest of other countries. Ensuring the interest of other powers required the involvement of New Zealand troops in regional strategic plans, which obliged deployment of its forces overseas. Both Australia and New Zealand became involved in both Malaysia and Vietnam in their endeavour to support both the UK and the US in their respective conflicts. Early New Zealand peace-keeping efforts were also notable for the situations where politicians in Wellington offered their support. In the early years of the development of modern peace-keeping operations New Zealand had offered a contribution to the peace-keeping force that would deploy to Egypt in 1956.[31] This was ultimately rejected, as was their renewed offer of support for the variety of operations proposed along the Indian-Pakistan border. Interestingly New Zealand's involvement, or offers of involvement, in peace-keeping actions were carefully directed at key Commonwealth disputes. New Zealand foreign policy during the 1960s was very clear in spite of the many ongoing changes both within the Commonwealth and outside of it. Successive New Zealand governments led by Holyoake between 1961 and 1970 maintained a policy of limited involvement in the peace-keeping of non-Commonwealth matters.[32]

The contrasting efforts of both New Zealand and Australia offer insight into the varying levels of the political rigidity that existed in their respective political spheres – and accompanying foreign policies. Australia was coming out of a period in which the political sphere was dominated by, Sir Robert Menzies, a staunch supporter of the UK and the Commonwealth.[33] It left that phase following

---

30 J. O'Neill, & N. Rees, *UN Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold war Era* (London: Routledge, 2005) p 24

31 Although this had been tainted by the relatively pro-British view taken by New Zealand, despite their instructions to their UN delegate to keep their comments on the action as brief as possible. - R. Pfeiffer, 'New Zealand and the Suez Crisis of 1956' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993) p 142

32 This in itself was a continuation of the 1950s New Zealand foreign policy under McKinnon – J. Crawford, 'A political H-bomb: New Zealand and the British Thermonuclear Tests of 1957-58' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 26 (1998) p 145

33 D. Devereux, 'Britain, the Commonwealth and the Defence of the Middle East 1948-56' *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1987) p 333

the accession of Harold Holt and a series of short-lived governments throughout the latter half of the 1960s. Meanwhile New Zealand had entered a period of political stability in foreign policy formerly enjoyed by the Australian government. That stability more or less ended with the departure of Holyoake in the middle of the 1970s. Nevertheless, there was a level of consistency in both Antipodean Dominions politically, if at different times, that was not replicated in the UK, or Canada (and although such stability can be seen in South Africa, it was a stability established on an anti-Commonwealth basis). It is perhaps unsurprising, in that context, that New Zealand managed a very consistent foreign policy that was generally, if not always, supportive of the Commonwealth during this period.

The relative consistency in policy must be seen in the context of a particularly volatile geopolitical setting. In the 1960s New Zealand was called upon twice to provide troops for active combat in two separate theatres. Firstly it was asked by the UK to support it and the newly formed Federation of Malaya against Indonesia in a relatively low-intensity conflict between 1957 and 1963.[34] Secondly, the US repeatedly asked New Zealand to make available forces for deployment in Vietnam.[35] The deployment of New Zealand troops in 1965 following an earlier deployment of non-combatant civilian forces was the first time New Zealand troops had been involved in a conflict that did not also involve the UK. New Zealand's involvement with a military conflict unrelated to the UK or the Commonwealth was perhaps one of the most clearly indicative events that the times were changing. The break, however, was largely symbolic. New Zealand's contribution amounted to the deployment of a single company for operations in Vietnam, while the 1st Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Regiment remained committed to the 28th Commonwealth Brigade in Malaya.[36] What is noteworthy here is that the Confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia had effectively been resolved by 1966, less than a year after the US sought New Zealand troops for deployment in Vietnam. So although it was, by virtue of the deployment to Vietnam, a break with the traditional approach New Zealand had taken to its defence policy it was not as ground-breaking as it may initially appear. New Zealand clearly remained significantly more interested and involved in their contributions to a joint military formation with the UK and Australia than it was in providing support to US military operations.

[34] A.J. Stockwell, British Documents on the End of Empire Series B Volume 8 *Malaysia* (London: The Stationary Office, 2004) p 635

[35] E. Keefer, & J. Glennon (eds) *Foreign Relations of the US 1961-1963* Volume 2 (Washington: United States Government Publishing Office, 1990) pp 351, 378, 486

[36] An earlier proposal to send a small number of men to join with Australia's AATV force of thirty men in 1962 was refused by New Zealand's Prime Minister, Holyoake. - Chiefs of Staff Committee 'Meeting with Assistance Secretary of Defence' 11 May 1962 PM 478/4/6 UKNA. Also see J. Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999) p 16 for a more detailed analysis of New Zealand forces in Malaya and Vietnam.

In general New Zealand politicians had not been slow to volunteer the deployment of their armed services to various regions of the world in support of their interests. Their relatively low level of involvement in Vietnam, even with respect to the size of their armed forces, made it very clear that New Zealand's support to the US in Vietnam was as much a flag-showing exercise in conjunction with the ANZUS treaty as it was with an actual commitment to pursuing operations independently of the UK.

Foreign policy amongst New Zealand's closest allies was undergoing relatively rapid changes during this period and stood in stark contrast to the relative stability of New Zealand's foreign policy. Australia had reorientated itself to focus on the 'Near North', meanwhile the UK was working towards closer economic ties with the European Economic Community.[37] The US was rapidly assuming a dominant position throughout the Far East even before the UK announced its withdrawal in 1969. By contrast New Zealand took a far more conservative view of foreign policy. Although Holyoake's support of the Commonwealth and in particular New Zealand's traditional ally, the UK, was quite clear New Zealand forces (aside from the New Zealand Special Air Service, and some air assets) were not committed to the conflict until the situation in Malaya had developed to the point where Indonesian armed forces entered the Malayan peninsula. Indeed Indonesian soldiers had effectively engaged the detachment of New Zealand forces stationed there as part of an ongoing – and unrelated – joint Commonwealth formation before Holyoake instructed that they were to be authorized for operations in Malaysia.[38] Similarly, the New Zealand contribution to Vietnam was initially focused on a very small civilian commitment and when militarized was only increased very slightly. New Zealand's stance across all Commonwealth meetings throughout the 1960s was similarly cconservative. It sided with Australia, South Africa, and the UK when the issue of critiquing another country's internal policy was raised.

The 1960s was a time of political and military upheaval around the world, with a variety of new organisations, new political objectives, military technologies, and indeed newly created countries. Against that background of turmoil, New Zealand under Holyoake's direction maintained a consistent,

[37] This had been building on ever-increasing interest in economic entanglement with Europe since 1956. - C. Schenk, 'Decolonisation and European Economic Integration: The Free Trade Area Negotiations 1956-58' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24 (1996) p 444

[38] K. Chin, *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p 30

if perhaps cautious approach to developments around the world. The sticking point was that there was a lingering perception, certainly in New Zealand, that Holyoake's support of the US effort in Vietnam was more involved than was actually the case. So much more was made of New Zealand's break with the UK, both domestically in New Zealand and abroad in the UK and the US, than can be supported by the substance of New Zealand's actions.[39] Unlike neighbouring Australia, which had a clear economic and manpower commitment to the US in terms of placing orders for military equipment and their major deployment to Vietnam, New Zealand was much more circumspect in answering US requests. New Zealand's interest in any kind of cooperative military endeavour appeared to receive a much cooler reception than it had over the previous two decades and even earlier. However, that reluctance was applied generally, although with less reservations when it came to the UK and the Commonwealth more broadly in particular areas such as peace-keeping.

New Zealand's efforts in peace-keeping deserve some further attention. Much like Canada New Zealand involved itself early on with peace-keeping activities. It was amongst the first to volunteer for the UN mission following the Suez crisis of 1956. It also volunteered for a number of missions across the Middle East, including a rejected proposal for a Commonwealth peace-keeping force in Kashmir following the series of conflicts between two Commonwealth member states – India and Pakistan.[40]

Despite that initial spurt of interest in peace-keeping New Zealand did not follow the same path as Canada. Whereas Canadian interests focused on peace-keeping operations in addition to its reorientation to a localized regional-based defence of its home territory New Zealand's approach to peace-keeping was rather more partisan and reserved. Greatest interest was expressed in deployments to areas which were fundamentally linked to New Zealand's foreign policy in one form or another. New Zealand's offer to contribute to the UN Emergency Force, for instance, supported New Zealand's relations with the UK.[41] However, New Zealand's support of the UK during the Suez crisis was well-known, and the use of the New Zealand peace-keepers was understandably declined. Shortly thereafter an offer of a contribution to deploy to the Kashmir region following ongoing conflict between India

[39] I. McGibbon, *New Zealand's Vietnam War: A History of Combat, Commitment and Controversy* (Auckland: Exisle publishing, 2010) p 537

[40] The rejection of the New Zealand force was, in fact, an element of a broader rejection of any suggestion of potential British involvement, with both sides considering it neither impartial nor significantly partial enough. - J. Colman, 'Britain and the Indo-Pakistani Conflict: The Rann of Kutch and Kashmir 1965' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37 (2009) p 473

[41] M. Carroll, *Pearson's Peacekeepers: Canada and the UN Emergency Force 1956-67* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009) p 67

and Pakistan in the mid-1960s was accepted.[42] Given their track record of preferential interest in Commonwealth-orientated peace-keeping affairs it is hardly surprising that New Zealand forces contributed a major element of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force in 1980. Contrast this level of involvement to their active peace-keeping deployments throughout the Middle East and even in Cyprus. The proposed New Zealand contributions were minuscule in comparison to their willingness to support more Commonwealth-centric peace-keeping and military endeavours. Whereas Canada under Pearson took an unambiguous pro-peace-keeping line and committed itself broadly to that role New Zealand under Holyoake pursued a peace-keeping policy that was favourable to the concept of supporting the Commonwealth.

Such activity placed New Zealand in a rather unique position in that it was favourably disposed to the Commonwealth and joint Commonwealth military efforts, and made an effort to conduct operations in line with those goals unimpeded by other concerns. Australia, clearly conscious of the growth of the US and particularly US involvement in the Pacific became torn between the US and the UK following Menzies' resignation in the early 1960s. Canada's interest in Commonwealth activities had steadily waned as it became increasingly concerned with the broader international situation. South Africa had as much turned its back on the Commonwealth as it had been forcibly removed from it. The UK had already started to explore alternatives to its empire and the Commonwealth, which by this time no longer resembled its original form nor offered the resources and support of the Empire and the Dominions that it had replaced. It is remarkable that the smallest and least militarily capable nation of these five countries remained the most interested in the Commonwealth as a tool of military cooperation even when its usefulness was in serious doubt.

UK difficulties during the 1960s

The UK, the lynchpin in joint Commonwealth military endeavours, suffered a number of reversals throughout the 1960s that impeded its ability to perform that role.[43] The most obvious of these was the number of territories carved out of the British Empire for the creation of new states. Some twenty new territories became independent of the UK during this period, and a further two independent

[42] J. Koops, N. MacQueen, T. Tardy, & P. Williams, (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of UN Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) p 223

[43] Indeed it was recognised that New Zealand would need to acquire a greater capacity to provide for the logistic support of its own forces even if by continuing to cooperate with Australia, the UK, and the US. - Letter to Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, from High Commissioner (South Africa) in Wellington 'New Zealand's Expenditure on Defence' 19 June 1963 MV103/4 Verdedigingsbeleid New Zeeland SANDFA

of Australia and New Zealand following a brief period of trusteeship. Although several of these states were quite small, both geographically and in terms of total population, it consisted of almost the entirety of British territory in Africa. In addition to this swathe of territories being released the last of the national servicemen finally ended their tours in the final months of 1963 which reduced the UK's ability to project force overseas. These two events weighed heavily on UK military considerations.

Furthermore, this was all severely complicated by events following the creation of the Federation of Malaya in 1957.[44] A confrontation with Indonesia arising over a territorial boundary dispute resulted in a series of low-intensity operations in Borneo and Sarawak lasting until 1966.[45] This limited engagement, although briefly expanded to operations on the mainland Malayan peninsula, was countered by a seemingly excessive deployment of British forces. The sheer quantity of men and ships despatched to secure the territorial borders of the new state was met by further decisions that prompted the deployment of the latest British interceptors, the English Electric Lightning. UK overseas deployment to South-East Asia was second only to British forces in Germany.[46] Such live combat testing of its latest technologies must no doubt have been of immense help to the various branches of the UK armed forces, but such regional troubles were only one half of the disturbed nature of the UK's strategic position. The effective loss of huge swathes of territory in Africa and across the Indian subcontinent fundamentally hindered UK defence capabilities.

The reduction in the scale and capability of the British armed forces had been an ongoing process since the end of the war. It was not until the middle of the 1960s that there was an end to the

[44] Although initially holding 'no objections to such a merger [Malaya, Sarawak, Brunei, and North Borneo] Indonesian foreign policy changed abruptly in the autumn of 1962. Negative commentary from a former Indonesian Premier, Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, was criticized by Tunku Abdul Rahman, resulting in a 'certain sections of influential Indonesian opinion' to view the new federation with increasing distrust. This ultimately resulted in *Confrontation* and comments from the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, that 'if it [the Federation] is an American base for instance, we shall then arrange for a Soviet base in our part of Borneo'. - 'Recent Developments in Anglo-Indonesian Relations' p 2 DEFE 7 UKNA

[45] According to Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, the Indonesian stance on this issue went much further. Reporting on a frank discussion with the Australian ambassador to Jakarta (an 'amended copy' of which was forwarded on to the UK and found in its archives) Subandrio outlines how he believed that the proposed amalgamation could not and would not work, that Indonesia was 'not confronting Malaysia, it was confronting the British [of which] Malaysia was merely the front for British power', and posed the question 'Did anyone imagine that the Tunku was a bulwark of strength against China?'. Commentary by the Australian ambassador at the end of the report detailed just how 'intransigent' Subandrio was at the meeting which he claimed 'reflects the fact that … [the Indonesian government] has been caught up … in its pretensions to grandeur.' - Amended Copy of Telegram no. 1143 from Mick Shann, Australian Embassy Jakarta to Foreign Office Canberra, 28 November 1963 DEFE 7 UKNA

[46] Annex to Memorandum by the Prime Minister 'Our Foreign and Defence Policy for the Future' 29 September 1961 CAB 134/1929 UKNA

kind of military capability that had given the UK the weight if needed to be used as a fulcrum for the other Commonwealth powers.[47] Multiple attempts, both within the armed services and in government sought to further reduce the overall amount of money being spent on the military. Government-led initiatives sought cuts in the budget through the introduction of new technologies.

The post-war global British strategy for the deployment of their conventional forces, which had been focused on a defence of Germany through the British Army on the Rhine, and a joint Commonwealth defence of the Middle East, was in urgent need of an update. Despite the rapidly changing strategic situation, and ongoing financial difficulties, there was no White Paper on defence until 1966, almost ten years after the 1957 White Paper.[48] During that intervening period developments within the British armed services continued apace. Serious reductions were made on an ad-hoc basis in an effort to keep defence expenditure down. These were usually taken from the front-line of each service and were typically undertaken with reference to ensuring the continuation and effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent.[49] Major projects that were scrapped in the 1966 White Paper included the TSR 2 strategic bomber, designed to deliver the UK's nuclear weapons, and the CVA-01 with its accompanying Type 82 destroyer escorts.

Despite these losses the Admiralty's success in ensuring that the Royal Navy maintained a class of ship capable of operating aircraft throughout the 1960s and into the 1980s, in spite of a clear instruction from successive governments over these two decades that there was no room in the budget for an 'aircraft carrier', was something of a marvel. That process also highlighted some of the key issues that faced the UK during this time.[50] It was indicative of the steadily debilitating nature of the financial restrictions placed on British forces which undermined its global capabilities. Any lingering notion that the UK could continue to act as a lynchpin for significant joint Commonwealth military activity in the

[47] Indeed there were drastic efforts to reduce the size of the British armed forces, particularly the army, during this period. This had serious implications for the traditional system of inter-Commonwealth alliances between regiments of the British Army and their Commonwealth counterparts. The Royal Artillery, for instance, was reduced by effectively nineteen regiments (eighteen declared and the nineteenth being a combination of smaller formations) by 1959, and with a further reduction planned to be in effect by 1962. This caused considerable concern in South Africa which requested a list of the timing of the reductions and what would happen to extant alliances that would now at a loose end following the British reorganisation. The UK replied that these alliances would have to become 'dormant'. - MV 148 Amalgamation of Reduction of British Regiments 'Alliances of UDF Units with Regiments of the British Army' 16 July 1958 and various annexed letters and enclosures SANDFA

[48] Statement on the Defence Estimates 1966: Part 1: The Defence Review, Cmnd 2901 UKNA

[49] For example, the RAF reduced its front-line fighter squadrons from '480 to 280 by mid-1959' but it accepted that there was a military risk involved in such a reduction. - Memorandum by the Minister of Defence Fighter Aircraft CAB 131 D(58)61 UKNA

aftermath of the cuts throughout the 1950s was thoroughly put to rest in the 1966 White Paper.[51]

Inter-service rivalries of this nature further exacerbated a shaky financial situation, and conflict was often dictated by funding issues.[52] The Royal Navy fought vigorously for the CVA-01 across a number of budgets. The Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force engaged in a particularly long and arduous debate over whether to pursue an island-based strategy or a carrier-based strategy for British deployments. The Royal Navy favoured an enduring global role centred on the construction and deployment of a carrier task force, at the heart of which would be a major fleet carrier: the CVA-01. The Royal Air Force's 'Island Stance' approach was predicated on the continuing deployment of air assets to the many British bases scattered around the world.[53] The Admiralty 'had doubts about the political possibility of retaining... the number of bases required by the “Island Stance” strategy'.[54] Meanwhile the Royal Air Force pointed to the fact that even with three carrier groups, only two of them could be counted upon at any one time and there was never any guarantee that those two would be in the right place at the right time, a point conceded by the Admiralty.[55] This debate formed the framework which characterized much of the inter-service debates in the UK in the 1960s. Although the Royal Navy lost out on its carrier-based approach with the cancellation of the CVA-01 in the 1966 White Paper, the Royal Air Force's island-hopping failed to materialise in any concrete sense either.

Part of the difficulty with the superficially viable 'Island Stance' was that even where it may have been possible to establish such bases, major start-up costs were involved. The most limited practical implementation of the plan was costed with extraordinarily favourable Royal Air Force

---

50 Specifically the growing rivalry between the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy's constant endeavours to continue to update itself in spite of an acceptance by the combined Chiefs of Staff, including the First Sea Lord, that role of the Royal Navy was to '[deal] with situations short of global war' and, in the RAF's view, this did not include the commissioning of such things as guided weapons cruisers, aircraft carriers, sixty-something submarines, nearing on 200 minesweepers of various types, and ships powered with nuclear propulsion. - See COS(56)219 7 June 1956, COS(56)280 25 July 1956, & The Policy Review: Paper by the Admiralty 1956 all in AIR 19. UKNA

51 Serious concerns had already been expressed that the 'reduced Fleet would be a diminution of British influence throughout the world: in the East as a whole but especially with Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, Hong Kong, and our other associates or dependencies' 1956 Memorandum by the Admiralty Point 31 AIR 19 Defence Expenditure UKNA

52 Conflict was also a regular occurrence between political and service heads of the different branches of the UK's armed forces. The Minister of Defence and the Secretary of State for Air were caught in a particularly long-winded debate regarding whether to have 10 or 12 Lightning Mk.3 squadrons for air defence purposes. - Brief by the Ministry of Defence and Air Ministry D(60)32 Military strategy for circumstances short of global war, 1960-70 7 March 1961 DEFE 7 UKNA

53 Brief for Secretary of State 'The Island Stance' Part I 1 February 1963 AIR 19 76/8/L UKNA

54 'Report of Enquiry into Carrier Task Forces' NR(63)2 22 April 1963 AIR 19 UKNA

55 Cabinet Conclusions 26th July 1957 D(57)13 CAB 131/18 UKNA

estimates of some £42 million. This accounted for the development of bases at Masirah, Ascension, Gan, and Aldabra.[56] It was accepted that this minimal development would limit deployment possibilities. There were constraints as to how far the air squadrons stationed at those bases could reach, and even within that reach the maximum possible intervention with that level of investment was a single battalion which would be sufficient for only ten and a half days before resupply by sea was needed.

Although the RAF's 'Island Stance' approach remained a possibility both during and after the widespread release of British territory the fundamental issue regarding the political security of these bases could not be assured.[57] The Royal Air Force proposals countered arguments as to the security of the bases with a somewhat flippant 'Why not?' attitude that flew in the face of mounting international pressure regarding British deployment and continuing imperial presence.[58]

Although inter-service rivalry effectively further reduced British military potential there was no question that the Royal Navy weathered it better than the other two services.[59] In part this was down to simple luck and in part the result of clever design. For example the Admiralty managed to mitigate the loss of their fully-fledged carriers somewhat with the development of the 'through-deck' cruiser, an aircraft carrier in all but name.[60] Similarly the 1960s saw a major ship-building effort with the introduction of Leander class frigates, County class destroyers, and the first nuclear-powered submarine in the form of *HMS Dreadnought*. Meanwhile the mishap over Skybolt had led to the introduction of Polaris and offered more to catapult the importance of the Royal Navy at the

---

56 Brief for Secretary of State 'The Island Stance' Part II 1 February 1963 AIR 19 76/8/L UKNA

57 Although this point was expressly raised with relation to Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation, the British government 'felt it necessary to proceed with caution in the UN because that body was so unpredictable' and that there could be resolutions 'which included a call fro the withdrawal of British bases' put in for consideration given the political difficulties they were causing. - Telegram no. 1553 from UK Mission to the UN to Foreign Office 30 September 1963 UKNA

58 One small paragraph is dedicated to the political difficulties relating to the security of these island bases (point 11 Part II). It suggested that it would not be possible for these bases to be 'construed as objectionable and provocative' despite their expansion and existence on the basis that they would not 'ordinarily have fighting troops nor air forces' stationed there. It claimed that these bases would have 'occasional visiting squadrons', with 'strategic stockpiles of military equipment', and 'fuel installations' permanently in place. - Brief for Secretary of State 'The Island Stance' Part II 1 February 1963 AIR 19 76/8/L UKNA

59 It is indicative of the bitterness and division within the UK's armed services that, while the Royal Air Force accepted the need for seaborne support and supplies, including amphibious landing ships, it was wholeheartedly set against the prospect of a fleet carrier for the Royal Navy. When specifically replying to the question 'Is there a possibility of compromise?' it was brutal in its assessment that there was not 'where the fleet carrier is concerned'. - Brief for Secretary of State 'The Island Stance' Point 23 Part III 1 February 1963 AIR 19 76/8/L UKNA

negotiating table than anything they could have ever possibly sought to argue or achieve through their own endeavours, which is not to say that they did not make such attempts.[61] In some ways this furthered the cause of cooperation with other members of the Commonwealth. The primacy of the Royal Navy, and the corresponding lack of investment in the army and Royal Air Force, including the end of National Service, created a situation which could be solved – or at least alleviated – by the Commonwealth, principally by providing more ground forces.

The UK military overseas

It is ironic, then, that British military activity across the decade was characterized by two major events that were dominated by action on land. The Indonesian-Malaysian Confrontation saw an exceptionally large deployment of all three services, each no doubt eager to demonstrate their importance to the Treasury.[62] Their large presence may also have been to offset concerns that the US considered that the 'military struggle with Indonesia will prove too much for them [the UK] and for

---

60 Other examples exist and can be found in the plethora of documents relating to the cuts suffered by the various service branches of the UK throughout the Cold War period. When requested to furnish a complete order of battle for the Royal Navy for the 1960s the Admiralty declined to submit the details of afloat support required to maintain that order of battle. - Appendix A to Annex to COS(60)276 'Admiralty Study to complement the Study on Military Strategy for Circumstances Short of Global War' 17 October 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA. The decision to leave out afloat support was particularly bothersome given that it had been established that it would not be possible to rely on bases ashore (this was in reference to the possibility that Singapore, Malaysia, and other areas might not be viable bases during a conflict). - Military Strategy for Circumstances Short of Global War JP(60)16 27 June 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA

61 Part of what made the Admiralty submarine-based approach more attractive than the Skybolt proposal, even before the US withdrew from the Skybolt concept, was a change in the requirements for the British nuclear deterrent. Instead of seeking to destroy '50% of 40 [Russian] cities' which according to the Treasury 'could not be afforded' there was now growing interest in a figure of '65% of 20 [Russian] cities' which lined up more favourably with Admiralty proposals for a 'hunter/killer/Polaris' submarine' nuclear deterrent than the Royal Air Force projected it could achieve with V.C.10/Skybolt for a similar cost. - Minutes from BND(SG)61 4 Point 8 AIR 19 UKNA. It is also interesting to note that the Polaris missile itself had been considered and found wanting by the UK on the basis that it had 'insufficient range to satisfy our requirements'. - CAB 131/18 D(58)47 UKNA. Another consideration against Polaris was that it was known to require a 'much larger supply of fissile material' which was already in short supply than the equivalent force composed of either or both of V bombers and Blue Streak missiles. - Cabinet Conclusions Minute 3 point b CAB 131 D(58)24 UKNA. Furthermore it had been viewed that the distribution of Polaris, on a national basis, could well lead to calls for further distribution to France, Italy, and potentially even Germany, which was all preferably avoided as far as senior American service personnel were concerned. Meeting of the Minister of Defence with the Chiefs of Staff and General Norstad: Extract from Minutes of MM/COS(60)8 27 July 1960 DO169 F108/12 UKNA. Also see K. Young, 'The Royal Navy's Polaris Lobby,' *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 25 (2002) p 65 for analysis on how such attempts were made.

62 Two brigade groups were initially deployed by the British Army, one deployed in Sarawak and the other in Brunei and Sabah with individual battalions being regularly rotated in and out of both the region for operations and for jungle warfare training in Malaysia. This number grew as the Confrontation continued, however, eventually reaching four brigades by 1965. - Indonesian Confrontation of Malaysia Annex I to COS376/63 Points 48 and also see Appendix B DEFE 7. Meanwhile the Royal Navy, although noting the initially limited deployment of ships to the region, outlined a plan which would see 'the whole of the Far East Fleet, including at least one strike carrier' to be made available for operations. Indonesian Confrontation of Malaysia Annex I to COS376/63 Appendix A Point 44 DEFE 7

which we [the US] will have to shoulder the burden.'[63] There were, in fact, more British assets deployed to the region than what was required to defend against what British intelligence services suspected Indonesia could realistically deploy on extended offensive operations.[64] Furthermore it involved almost every element of the British armed forces – including special forces and support elements. It was notable alone for the sheer number of warships dedicated to the patrol of the waters around Malaysia – approximately 80 ships throughout the three year period – many of which were on prolonged duty. Although the Indonesian navy was large, the number of comparable ships it could deploy reliably was far fewer.[65] There were a number of requests for assistance from the UK to its nearby Commonwealth allies, Australia and New Zealand over the course of the conflict. The defence of Malaysia had even become an Australian election issue. As a result requests were considered to need 'careful consideration as to timing' undermining the coherence of any potential support.[66] This support was forthcoming but both Australia and New Zealand fielded relatively small contributions. New Zealand's small contribution only appeared in the form of the battalion already in position on the Malayan peninsula. Although the Malaysian contribution was much larger all three were dwarfed by the deployment of British troops. The British troops included the Gurkha battalions that had been retained following the

[63] Further concerns were expressed, in addition to the concern regarding the inability of the UK to contain Indonesia, with respect to the future viability of the US bases in the Philippines, and the potential ramifications of a collapse of the Indonesian economy, should the US oppose Indonesia over this issue. - Minute for the Minister of Defence: American Policy Towards Indonesia FS/63/106 8 November 1963 DEFE 7 UKNA

[64] The report was rather dismissive of the threat posed by the Indonesian Army. In fact a mere two paragraphs, both relatively small at a few sentences each, detail the Indonesian Army, despite the entire Annex numbering some fifteen pages. It claimed that 'the maximum force which the Indonesians could effectively deploy and maintain on major operations would be a brigade group by land or sea, and two or three battalions by air.' Indonesian Confrontation of Malaysia Annex I to COS376/63 Appendix A Point 3 and 4 DEFE 7 UKNA. Further reports on the amphibious capability of the Indonesian armed forces suggested that even this had been exaggerated with respect to their capacity to launch an amphibious assault. The limited number of landing craft available, most of which was of 'dubious serviceability' and at any rate 'dispersed throughout the Indonesian Archipelago' suggested that any such attack was in fact limited to a 'battalion group' with a 'brigade group' (the original estimate) only possible with a 'crash programme [lasting] three months'. The total combined strength, assuming it was all brought to bear, would amount to eight or nine battalions – control over which was believed would disintegrate to local commanders within 'a few days of launching the operation'. - Annex to COS 388/63 Indonesian Military Capabilities against Eastern Malaysian up to April 1964 DEFE 7 UKNA. Although there was some concern as to its relatively modern air force 'many of the airfields which the Indonesians would need for operations against the Borneo territories... lack the necessary infrastructure to support continuous operations lasting several weeks' - Appendix 3 to Annex to COS 388/63 The Indonesian Air Force April 1964 DEFE 7 UKNA

[65] The Indonesian Navy was estimated to number '1 cruiser, 13 destroyers/escorts, 12 submarines, 29 coastal escorts, and 26 fast patrol boats' and 26 support craft ranging from minesweepers to submarine tenders - Indonesian Confrontation of Malaysia Annex I to COS376/63 Appendix A point 1 DEFE 7 UKNA. Incidentally, this number was in fact inflated as well with the 'majority of the larger ships of their surface fleet (1 cruiser, 7 destroyers, and 4 frigates)... [were] undergoing refits or extensive maintenance'. -Annex to COS 388/63 Indonesian Military Capabilities against Eastern Malaysian up to April 1964 DEFE 7 UKNA

[66] Annex to COS(63)63 'Matters for Discussion by the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee – Indonesia' 5 November 1963 point e DEFE 7 UKNA

independence of India and these battalions remained a source of difficulty with regards to their deployment and the manpower ceilings imposed on the British Army.[67]

British indications of an early departure from the region, from as early as 1965 with the Confrontation still ongoing, were met with a furious reaction from both Australia and the US.[68] The UK's difficulty was, once again, financial – ironically this was undoubtedly compounded by the efforts by the various armed services of the UK to prove to the Treasury that they needed all of the money in the budget for defence, and probably more. The cost to maintain operations to contain the Indonesians, with extremely limited support from the Commonwealth countries in the region and none from the US was an extraordinarily high burden for the Treasury to bear. Operationally part of the difficulty with the deployment was that the international political atmosphere hindered offensive action. This obliged the UK, and its partners, to maintain such a deployment of forces effectively for as long as Indonesia's government saw fit to continue its policy of Confrontation. In the event the Confrontation with Indonesia was 'won' when Sukarno's government in Indonesia fell apart rather than as an outcome of any British or Commonwealth action in the region.

Almost contemporaneously with the Confrontation was the Aden Emergency in the Middle East. The casualty rate and deployment level were significantly lower in Aden than they were in the Confrontation despite the Aden Emergency lasting a year longer. The lack of interest in the pursuit of a Commonwealth commitment to Aden in the Middle East, which had been the traditional area for support operations of Commonwealth members, stood in stark contrast to the support requested and received by the UK in South-East Asia. This is perhaps one of the clearest indications of the shift in strategic priorities in the Commonwealth from being centred on the Middle East to regional priorities. Aden, now effectively a purely British interest with no local supportive populace or government, was effectively ceded to its fate despite its clear strategic importance. Certainly the problems of maintaining such a strategically vital post were apparent, and the decision must be considered in light of an agreement for a joint US-UK naval base in Diego Garcia in late 1965. This provided, after a relocation programme, a more secure naval base free of protests by any native inhabitants. British interests in the region and indeed their interests outside of Europe were steadily reduced throughout the post-war

[67] Summary of Conclusions of the MM/SM(62)4th Meeting attended by the Minister of Defence, First Lord of the Admiralty, Secretary of State for War, and the Secretary of State for Air, Point 7. 24 May 1962 AIR 19 UKNA

[68] J. Subritzky, 'Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire in South-East Asia 1961-65' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000) p 223

decades. The effective withdrawal from between Cyprus and South-East Asia, characterized by both the lack of interest by Commonwealth partners and the growth in difficulty in maintaining bases in the face of newly independent territories, had more or less been completed with the withdrawal from Aden in 1967.

There was far from a uniform or universally agreed acceptance of this withdrawal, even in the UK. British plans for the construction of new bases were regularly suggested in spite of the precarious political and financial situation throughout the 1960s.[69] Such plans included detailed suggestions for the construction of a new naval base in East Africa, specifically in Kilindi, Mombasa. This had previously been used temporarily as a naval base for the British Far East Fleet during the Second World War, but the proposal was never to come to fruition.[70] Increased local pressure, and a readily available alternative at Diego Garcia that had US support made these plans unattractive. This was reflected in the Defence White Paper of 1966 which reiterated the importance of cooperation with allies in the pursuit of the UK's goals.

The main focus of British interests during the 1960s was in managing a withdrawal, both planned and in reaction to events, while simultaneously exploring further cooperation and involvement with its allies. Those nations with which the UK sought such cooperation, however, steadily expanded throughout the 1960s largely in line with their own narrowing focus on their immediate regional concerns. The UK was also not above narrowing its strategic focus. In particular, British cooperation with nations on the European continent was the subject of remarkable growth during the period. Although the UK did not become a member of the EEC until 1973 the interest in membership arose

[69] There are detailed drawings of naval bases and supply routes stretching from the UK to Australia and towards Hong Kong that highlighted the precarious nature of the sea and air routes from one end of British territory to the other. One route passes through Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus (which were all considered Class I bases in that they could supply everything required without further development). However, this route then needed to transfer through Turkey and Persia before moving to the Seychelles and the Maldives (both considered in need of further development) before drawing an line directly to Perth in Australia. The route from Gibraltar through to Cape Town and from there into the Indian Ocean was marked as being 'subject to further study'. What is clear, however, is that the spate of political developments had undermined the logistical supply route from the UK out to the Far East and that the alternatives available were ill-suited to requirements. - Appendix A to Annex to JP(61)91 'Strategic Dispositions and Capability 1970' 11 March 1961 PREM11 UKNA

[70] It was considered 'most unlikely that we [the UK] should be able to use this base for any purpose of our own after Kenya becomes independent.' -Minute for the Prime Minister 'Defence Policy' 9 October 1961 PREM11 UKNA. There has been some speculation that some of the difficulties encountered with some of the more reasonable aspects of the plan, such as a British naval base to be located in Australia, were the result of local desires to prevent, delay, or otherwise hinder any potential British withdrawal from the region. - A. Benvenuti, 'Australian Attempts to Forestall Britain's Military Disengagement from South-East Asia, 1965-1966' *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 20 (2009) p 95

when the first application was lodged in 1961.[71] Indeed there had been detailed discussions between the UK and Australia with relation to the 'brass tacks' of 'the Common Market problem' as early as 1962.[72]

The announcement of a withdrawal from East of the Suez in 1969 in many ways highlighted the difficulty with British involvement in South-East Asia. Commonwealth cooperation and strategy was effectively based on the defence of the communication and support structures between the UK and overseas territory. The theoretical establishment of Main Support Areas which were to sustain a British war effort on a regional basis was a proposal fundamentally without substance.[73] The Main Support Area concept presupposed a level of local technical and industrial capacity comparable to that found in the UK.[74] That level of development and security of communication routes simply was not something which could be assured outside of North America.[75] During a time when the focus both nationally and internationally was on the need for a national defence built on a regional rather than a global basis the idea that support from the UK could be possible with an actively hostile Middle East and an indifferent South Africa was never actionable.

In contrast the armed forces of the US, by virtue of their country's geographic position, could reach both the Far East and Europe without travelling through Africa or the Middle East. The UK lacked not only the economic power to achieve such long-range influence but was fundamentally hampered by geography. The rationale behind Commonwealth cooperation, for the UK, had come to

---

71 Even at this early stage such interest in the EEC had raised alarm bells in Australia regarding the UK's commitment to the South-East Asia region. - A. Benvenuti, 'Australian Reactions to Britain's Declining Presence in South-East Asia 1955-63' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34 (2006) p 420

72 Letter from Mr. Menzies to Mr. Macmillan 18 April 1962 PREM11 T211A/62 UKNA

73 These were 'areas which contain concentration of man-power, industrial potential or sources of food or raw material, such that they are essential to the war effort'. Specifically they included the UK, the American continent, Africa south of the Sahara, including East Africa, and Australia & New Zealand. India's absence was on account of the 'uncertainty as to her political future' and that it was 'more exposed to air attack than the other main support areas'. - Strategic Position of the British Commonwealth RG 25 Vol 247 File D-19-15 LAC

74 Indeed the Commonwealth Migration Council had long advocated that serious consideration be given to the possibility of the migration of industry, as well as people, from the UK to the various nations of the Commonwealth in an effort to ensure that, should war erupt, the Commonwealth would not be completely denuded of industrial capabilities in the early stages of the war. -Letter from CL Heater to Dr. Erasmus South African Minister of Defence 22 June 1951 MV128/2 Besoek aan Buiteland Minister en Geselskad 1951 SANDFA

75 Ibid. The maintenance of the routes of communication between the UK and the Main Support Areas required that a huge swathe of potential territory needed to be held to make them viable. Western Europe, including Scandinavia; North-East Africa and the Middle East; India; and South-East Asia all needed to be held in order to ensure that the lanes of communication and resupply remained open. While there was some possibility of a route between the UK and the US being held, the problems of the rest of the routes were all well-known. Furthermore, it was considered that 'under the circumstances it is doubtful whether the industrial potential of the UK could be maintained. … [there was] a grave risk that the UK would be reduced to a Malta-type existence.'

rest on historic and cultural ties.[76] There was no longer a pragmatic basis under which joint Commonwealth military activity could be conducted without subjecting the UK to a logistical nightmare scenario where its lines of supply were problematic even before any potential conflict had erupted. This situation and the accompanying problems of resupply and tenuous logistical lines had been apparent since the late 1950s. Specifically after 1957 the last direct route from RAF Khormaskar in Aden was to be found through RAF Gan in the Maldives.

With Aden's independence in 1967 there was a surge in the complications involved in reaching RAF Gan. Despite intermittent subsequent activity RAF Gan ceased operations by 1971. All of the possible alternative routes were problematic. The base at Cyprus still possessed active airfields, and advancements in military technology afforded the Royal Air Force greater operational range than ever before.[77] Even still, it was problematic to maintain an air supply route from Cyprus to the Maldives with the technology of the period.[78] Such activity was subject to the whims of the local Arab powers, either by virtue of them offering airbases and other facilities, or an offer of 'overflight rights'.[79] While the latter was technically feasible to enforce if necessary without political agreement for some aircraft the precariousness of such an arrangement made it untenable.[80] The reality of the situation was that the supply line to the Far East would become hostage to how those states viewed British policy. This was unacceptable even if they were likely to receive approval which was far from assured considering the legacy issues left over from the Mandate of Palestine at the start of the Cold War and continuing

---

[76] This manifested in a variety of ways, but cross-Commonwealth communication beyond Prime Ministerial and service meetings was quite significant. The Commonwealth Press Union, for example, provided a cheap means of cross-Commonwealth communication. - D. Cryle, 'Cornerstone of the Commonwealth: The Press Union and the Preservation of the Penny Cable Rate 1941-67' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2014) p 154

[77] Indeed following 1957 it was agreed by the Chiefs of Staff that this sovereign base alone was sufficient for their needs. - E. Hatzivassilou, 'Blocking Enosis: Britain and the Cyprus Question March-December 1956' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 19 (1991) p 260

[78] With a distance of some 3,366 miles between Cyprus to RAF Gan only the RAF's strategic bombers of its combat aircraft could make the trip without refuelling. Only a minority of its extant transport aircraft could make the trip unaided. The expansion of the RAF Transport Command to included the provision of transport aircraft such as the Vickers VC10, Shorts Belfast, and the Bristol Britannia allowed for a technical capacity to make the trip limited numbers of these aircraft were available. In effect Transport Command could only provide 'about a divisional lift' and this was likely to have been augmented by charter planes. - Record of Meeting between H. Watkinson, and R. McNamara, 1 May 1962 DEFE7 UKNA

[79] There were some relatively friendly states in the region, Jordan specifically may still have been a possibility but probably not for extended and guaranteed access; which is what was required. - N. Ashton, 'A Special Relationship Sometimes in Spite of Ourselves: Britain and Jordan 1957-73' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33 (2005) p 239

[80] Annex to Memorandum by the Prime Minister 'Our Foreign and Defence Policy for the Future' Part II 29 September 1961 PREM11 UKNA

objections to British policy in the Middle East.[81] The route around South Africa was complicated not only by the sheer distance involved but also due to ongoing upset surrounding South Africa's domestic policies. Contributing to the new US base at Diego Garcia was ill-advised as it contained many of the same problems as that of RAF Gan.[82] Similar ideas, such as the aforementioned possibility of the creation of a British base on the coast of East Africa around Mombasa, also failed to suit British needs and circumstances. There were, however, viable alternatives that significantly reduced the cost to the Treasury and were less politically problematic. The Trucial States offered to pay the costs of continuing to operate a base and station warships for their defence from 1968 onwards. The route from Cyprus to the Trucial States was more technically feasible, the local situation clearly more favourable to British deployments, and the cost to the Treasury would be comparatively minimal. However, how the international community, and particularly neighbouring Arab states, would react to a state in the region paying for the British military to remain certainly made that an unattractive prospect. Indeed in the preceding year the UK was largely considered by a majority of the neighbouring Arab countries to have supported the Israelis in the 1967 war, with corresponding implications for UK relations.[83]

With UK basing possibilities along the two routes around Africa fundamentally compromised and the next nearest base at best half an ocean away from either the Suez or the Cape it had effectively become impossible for the UK to guarantee its lines of supply and support beyond Africa. So although Commonwealth defence cooperation had, in effect, survived the 1960s and was more or less assured in South-East Asia for some time into the future, it could not be reliably reached or supported from the UK. The importance of maintaining the supply line to Australia and the Far East had been paramount in both World Wars. With that line effectively cut the possibility of any enlargement of scale or scope of Commonwealth cooperation in the last remaining region of the world where such a development could possibly have existed, was extinguished.

---

81 The UK was very aware, and commented publicly, on the fact that Palestine was proving an ongoing debilitating issue in Anglo-Arab relations. The British Secretary of State would claim that a 'solution to the Palestine problem is important... because we [the UK] want to secure the unity of purpose of the countries of the Middle East.' Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at Beirut 23 November 1955 MV 196 SANDFA

82 Much of the difficulty surrounding Diego Garcia as a potential site for a military base were resolved following discussions with the US which provided for a favourable (to the UK) share of the economic cost of such an endeavour. - C. Chen, 'A Diplomatic Tightrope: The Whitlam Government and the Diego Garcia Dilemma' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2014) p 533

83 W. M. Louis, 'The British Withdrawal from the Gulf 1967-71' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31 (2003) p 83

Despite this tenuous connection South-East Asia received priority deployments from the UK throughout the 1960s.[84] This region was prioritized to such a degree that towards the end of the 1960s it became very clear that there were, in effect, two columns of British power. One was based on the British Isles and in Germany, and the other in Singapore and Malaysia. What disappeared during the decade was the link between those two pillars.[85] Attempts had been made to fill that link, first with the Middle East Defence Conference in the previous decade, and subsequently by organisations like CENTO. There was no clear solution to the ongoing objection to a continued British presence in the Middle East. As a consequence there was no viable replacement of the surety that British bases at Aden and Simonstown had previously offered.[86]

Even where such objections to British deployments did not directly exist, the possibility of that changing, or providing grounds for increased hostility from certain other countries in the region (such as Iran's interest in Kuwait on the basis of a supposed British influence in the country in 1967), remained a constant issue.[87] These concerns were shared by the service branches themselves as well, especially with regards to South-East Asia where the British Army was particularly concerned that it might become involved in a land war and be dragged into a situation not unlike the French experienced in Indochina and Algeria.[88]

Even though funds for maintaining such facilities in the region could potentially be found in the

[84] This, however, is not to say that reductions were not also made to the deployments to the Far East. Far from it, between 1957 and 1960 the intention had been to reduce the aircraft stationed there by approximately 35 planes. - The Policy Review: The RAF Programme 1957/58 and 1958/59 Note by the Air Ministry Point 9 section E in AIR 19 UKNA. Events in the region would supplant that intention, however, resulting in increased deployment. The after-effect of this being a higher priority for the region while it was still a major theatre of operations (i.e. until 1971). Similar distinctions exist for the Royal Navy in this regard. Early planning regarding the Far East, continuing into 1957 with the Chiefs of Staff meeting of 22 February 1957 suggested a naval deployment to Singapore of 'two frigates but with no naval base' with a 'show of frigates' in the Persian Gulf that was seen to be 'totally inadequate to carry out the role assigned to [the Royal Navy] in that document [COS(57)47. - Long Term Defence Review: The Royal Navy P5 March 1957 AIR 19. For more detail see COS(60)276 including it annexes and appendices in DEFE 7/2232 UKNA.

[85] This had been recognised as early as 1952 which recognised the importance of proper support and that, given the choice, if reductions were to be made then they should come from the Middle East Theatre. - FO 371/102823/JE 1192/676 'Middle East Policy' 11 December 1953 UKNA

[86] The guaranteed future use of Simonstown was covered by mutual agreement following the British handover of the base to the South Africa government in 1955. - MV 190 Simonstad 'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the UK June 1955' Part II SANDFA

[87] The Royal Air Force had even taken advantage of some of these 'reinforcement routes' to deploy some of their shorter ranged aircraft before the political situation in the countries they were flying over deteriorated further. This of course left those squadrons if not stranded out there then at least stuck on deployment for the foreseeable future. - Brief by the Ministry of Defence and Air Ministry D(60)32 Military Strategy for Circumstances Short of Global War, 1960-70 7 March 1961 DEFE 7 UKNA

[88] Letter from CEF Gough to General Sir George Cole 11 January 1961 DEFE 7 UKNA

Treasury the difficulty by the end of the decade was that this was simply no longer a priority expenditure, of either economic or political capital, for the UK. Although one can certainly marvel at the ingenuity of the Royal Navy by ensuring the acquisition of miniature carriers through wordplay it highlights the inability of the Exchequer to provide the resources required to protect British possessions and interests.

Conclusion

Although much of the focus here has been on the UK, that is solely to account for the fact that it was their departure from South-East Asia that significantly reduced the level of Commonwealth cooperation in the region. It was a departure brought on by problems in the Middle East, a fact which had long been recognised in British military policy but for which no solution was ever found. The defence of Australia, New Zealand, India, and much of the Far East rested upon the security and safety of the supply lines from the UK through the Middle East or, prior to the construction of the Suez Canal, around the Cape of Good Hope. When that was lost, it became irrelevant how many squadrons or flotillas were in South-East Asia, or how many interested nations – even Commonwealth nations – in that region were in continuing cooperative efforts. The defence of the UK itself was forever foremost in British military thought – and the importance of a localized national defence increasingly advocated for in political circles around the world throughout the Cold War – it was untenable to risk a divide of British military strength, at a time when its comparative strength was decreasing with respect to other major powers.

In many ways this was a bleak period for Commonwealth defence cooperation more generally. Canada and South Africa contended with their own issues, as detailed in the previous chapter, and were effectively removed from the equation insofar as any possibility of a continuation of Commonwealth defence cooperation could be said to exist. Meanwhile, Australia was increasingly enticed by more suitable US technology and after the retirement of Sir Robert Menzies had a political establishment which was more interested in US engagement in South-East Asia. New Zealand was formulating a new, if conservative, defence policy. The UK was left with a dying beacon of Commonwealth cooperation in South-East Asia, but one which was increasingly tricky to engage with and support due to the complications in connecting the British Isles and the Far East.

It would be neater to suggest that this amounted to the end of Commonwealth defence cooperation. The argument that the reduction in British deployments worldwide led to the creation of two pillars of power, one in Europe and the other in South-East Asia, which were fundamentally undermined and as a result finished following the collapse of the link between the two is a compelling argument. The withdrawal from East of Suez certainly presented challenges for continued Commonwealth cooperation, as indeed did the changes to the Commonwealth structure and the influence of other international actors as outlined in this and the previous chapter. However, while this may have been an end of sorts there were a variety of mitigation measures taken by Australia, New Zealand, and the UK in response to these developments. Indeed the story of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade was far from finished in 1970. It would persist until well into the mid-1970s. Furthermore, South-East Asia remained a bedrock of Commonwealth military engagement with the creation of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Arrangements which took stock of all of these changes and adapted themselves to continue in their existing role irrespective of developments. For Commonwealth defence cooperation the 1960s saw the development of a wide variety of challenges that it effectively amounted to an existential threat. It was not until the end of the following decade that it became clear that this cooperation had not died but that it was reworked to better reflect the new international context.

Chapter five: Joint Commonwealth defence research

Introduction

This chapter examines joint Commonwealth defence research between 1949 and 1981. It highlights the decreased capacity of the UK to continue to supply the Commonwealth with conventional weapons. It points to how the Commonwealth began considering a greater variety of options to meet requirements. It explores the joint nuclear research effort conducted amongst the Commonwealth, and the unwitting contributions that were made to the development of nuclear weapons programmes in South Africa and India. Finally, it examines the role of the US in Commonwealth nuclear weapons development and research more generally. This chapter argues that the Commonwealth as a whole, including the UK, began to consider alternative options to UK-supplied military hardware. This was, in part, driven by an increasingly competitive and varied selection of hardware available from the US. It examines South Africa's different path and how its internal situation and international response led to the development of its own armament industry. This argument is framed in the context of the long-term implications and process of defence procurement that had the effect of continuing cross-Commonwealth interoperability and compatibility of equipment for far longer than the political will to do so existed. This fits into the overall argument by providing further evidence for a continuation of Commonwealth defence cooperation long after the basis for it had failed, as well as pointing out key instances of Commonwealth defence cooperation that occurred during the period. These issues are approached in three ways. First, the chapter details the increased competition in conventional weapons research. Second, it explores the joint research efforts and the arms sales that supported defence research in the UK specifically. Finally it concludes with an analysis of the implications for Anglo-Australian nuclear research in the context of continued Commonwealth defence cooperation and points to the mercenary-like approach pursued by successive British governments in an effort to ensure that the UK retained a relevant independent nuclear deterrent.

Joint Commonwealth defence research is a complex topic to consider because there is no official organisation that coordinated this activity on any substantive level. That no single archive encompasses all the material needed to examine the broader implications is a serious obstacle to analysis that greater ease of travel worldwide and digitisation has not yet fully overcome. This has influenced the broader historiography by skewing the analysis towards a national focus. Where international comparisons are made they are often too heavily weighted towards bilateral research

agreements and rarely makes connections outside of the comparative. The vast bulk of research on UK nuclear development and strategy, for instance, is written from the perspective of Anglo-American strategic planning and cooperation.[1] This is in spite of the fact that British nuclear technology in its earliest stages was influenced by immediate Commonwealth considerations – both in terms of how research was conducted and where weapons were deployed. Furthermore there is a dearth of analysis on the implications of the delay between research and procurement on defence projects after 1947. This is particularly important in the context of continuing Commonwealth military connections and the delay between the Dominions turning towards the US and other foreign suppliers and the resulting consequences. This chapter approaches the subject cognisant of those limitations, even as it acknowledges that the depth of detail that can be provided here will be less than that of an analysis which focused specifically on the research and procurement programmes of any single country.

One of the more notable aspects of Commonwealth cooperation in this area was the exchange of personnel and technology in the field of nuclear weapons development. Both Canada and the US helped India and South Africa respectively to develop nuclear technology. Meanwhile there was a similar joint effort between Australia and the UK. It was an ironic twist that the latter effort did not result in a nuclear weapon for Australia, but provided both India and South Africa with the tools to complete their own nuclear weapons programmes. Notwithstanding, of course, Anthony Eden's promise in 1956 to supply Australia with nuclear weapons in event of a war, even if that had become a somewhat more measured view a few years later.[2]

It is worth noting that the UK was at the heart of research relations amongst the Old Commonwealth. Although there were cooperative research agreements on specific subjects between Commonwealth members other than the UK, these were not usually defence-related research projects. The decline in the UK's capabilities, however, was not significantly offset by a growth in other joint Commonwealth defence research projects, even when it became clear during the 1960s that the UK

---

1 See, for instance, M. Navias, *Nuclear Weapons and British Strategic planning* (London: Clarendon Press, 1991), I. Clark & N. Wheeler, *The British Origins of Nuclear Strategy* (Clarendon Press, 1989), S. Schrafstetter, and S. Twigge, *Avoiding Armageddon: Europe, the US and the Struggle for Nuclear Non-proliferation 1945-1970* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2004)

2 Anthony Eden went so far as to declare that he foresaw no impediment to the employment of nuclear weapons aboard Australian aircraft during a conflict. Harold Macmillan held a slightly different view. - For Eden's reply see Telegram from Foreign Office to Washington Embassy, 9 July 1956 EG1/115, and for MacMillan see Telegram from Menzies to MacMillan, 29 June 1961 PREM 11/3202 UKNA

could no longer sustain research projects on all aspects of defence technology.[3] Despite recognising the strain that was on the UK's weapons research establishment there was little thought put towards reducing the number of research projects. The US Department of Defence forming the view that by 1962 the UK had turned into an unreliable research partner because it spread its efforts too thinly.[4]

The declining capacity of the UK defence research establishment and the increase in the number of research programmes led to the emergence of the US as a key research partner on defence issues throughout the 1960s for the Commonwealth, especially for Canada and Australia. There was, nevertheless, an endurance of compatibility of equipment amongst the Commonwealth long after the closeness of their research and procurement decisions came to an end. This lingering similarity was not to last forever. The speed at which Commonwealth countries branched out from British equipment and research differed amongst the Commonwealth driven by their own individual and particular requirements. In the immediate post-war period the armed forces of all Commonwealth countries were using such equipment as to be effectively compatible with current and planned British military equipment. Although the beginning of a major divergence can be seen at various points across different key elements, the start of more widespread divergence generally occurred around the 1960s. It was during that decade that the various members of the Commonwealth replaced some of their Second World War weapons, ships, and other equipment and as part of that process there was an increased interest of Commonwealth countries in military suppliers from outside the Commonwealth.

One of the most important defence research considerations during the 1960s, and indeed throughout much of the Cold War, was nuclear weapons research. The decision in 1946 by the US to restrict information with regards to nuclear weapons ironically led to increased levels of cooperation amongst the Commonwealth.[5] This came in the form of Anglo-Australian research at Woomera.[6] This was not matched with cooperation involving Canada, South Africa, or New Zealand. It was almost ten years later before the Anglo-Australian nuclear research was again undermined by a renewal of Anglo-American cooperation. The US – UK Agreement of 1957 fundamentally altered the value of the UK's

3 Cabinet Conclusions D(57)10 18th November 1957 CAB 131/18 UKNA

4 Visit by Director-General of Defence Research to Department of Defence (US) May 1962 DEFE 7/2386 UKNA

5 Such Commonwealth-based activity ran contrary to American desires for the UK to participate in 'a European MRBM project'. - Minute 'Polaris' Chief of the Air Staff 16 June 1960 DO169 F108/12 UKNA

6 This 'joint project' formed the basis of research for such proposed nuclear delivery systems as Blue Streak and would encounter significant debate and difficulties in Anglo-Australian relations regarding the cost of the project, the viability of its outcomes, and its subsequent closure. - Brief 'The Joint Project' Part 1 December 1960 DO 169 UKNA

existing arrangement with Australia given the comparatively more useful access to US testing facilities and research. The high costs involved in the Australian project had also raised serious questions about its viability.[7] Despite these concerns tests continued in a reduced but tangible way until they stopped in their entirety in 1963.[8]

When restrictions on nuclear proliferation in the US eased it was matched with a corresponding increase in US assistance to other nations in the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.[9] The *naïveté* of that programme became readily apparent in later years. Indeed the supply of two nuclear reactors to South Africa from the US as part of this programme eventually led to the development of military-grade nuclear weapons in South Africa. The more widespread access to nuclear technology, in part spurred on by US activities, led to the widespread growth of nuclear technological proficiency in key Commonwealth countries that had not featured in UK participation. Indeed there was some non-UK research cooperation amongst the Commonwealth with the operation of Canadian-supplied nuclear reactors to India began in 1960. Much like US assistance to South Africa, Canadian assistance to India also contributed to the knowledge base of the Indian nuclear weapons programme.[10]

The delayed realisation of policy aims must also be considered. While the UK replaced and upgraded its nuclear weapons stockpile with US designs, extant stockpiles of domestically-built nuclear weapons, developed in conjunction with Australia, were kept maintained in bases in the UK and in other Commonwealth countries. Although UK arrangements with the US in respect of the Polaris system were agreed in late 1962 the first Polaris missile platform was not operationally deployed until 1968.[11] Even then, the majority of the nuclear weapons maintained and operated by the UK until 1970 were Red Beard and Blue Danube.[12] Both Red Beard and Blue Danube had been designed by the UK based on testing conducted with Australia. Similarly, the outcome of sharing non-military nuclear

---

7 It was also widely considered that the US did not believe in the viability of national deterrent outside of the US and the USSR. - Annex 2 to Review of Australian Labour Party Nuclear Policy 31 July 1962 DO 164/39 UKNA

8 Telegram from CRO to High Commissioner Canberra, 11 April 1962 DO 164/17 UKNA

9 The basis for this was in Eisenhower's 'Atoms for peace' policy, the goal of which was to spread nuclear technology for civilian purposes and encourage a collective agreement that the military application of such technology was against everyone's interests. For an analysis of the Atoms for Peace policy see I. Chernus, *Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace* (Austin: Texas A&M University Press, 2002)

10 G. Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001) p 27

11 K. Stoddart, *Losing an Empire and Finding a Role: Britain, the USA, NATO, and Nuclear Weapons 1964-1970* (London: Macmillan, 2012) p 149

technology in 1957 with other members of the Commonwealth did not result in a viable weapon until the mid- to late-1970s. India did not develop a functioning nuclear weapon until 1974.[13] Meanwhile South Africa only tested its device in 1977.[14]

There are three key dates here for Commonwealth nuclear weapons research; 1946, 1957, and 1970. These demarcate the growth, peak and decline of cross-Commonwealth cooperation on nuclear research. Although a delay between policy and practical arrangements clearly existed, what was equally clear was that by the start of the 1970s the last deployment of anything that could be considered a "Commonwealth" nuclear weapon had been withdrawn from active service. By the late 1970s the only stockpiles of nuclear weapons which were developed and manufactured within a Commonwealth country were in India.

Competition in conventional weapons research

Nuclear weapons research was only one element of a broader engagement of Commonwealth cooperation in defence research. The development and procurement of conventional weaponry and other defence-related material had a much more obvious effect on the level of interoperability amongst Commonwealth armed forces. The Commonwealth's approach to joint research projects and intra-Commonwealth weapon system procurement was haphazard at best. The lack of a central planning for defence research was evident even inside the UK. Indeed recognition that the UK could no longer afford to duplicate military research did not gain traction until 1957.[15] The US had expressed a preference that the UK should avoid duplication as well, going so far as to suggest that they 'ought not

---

[12] Given the yield of their respective warheads (between 10kt and 25kt) these were not particularly large weapons. British service personnel, however, considered anything under 10kt to be a tactical nuclear weapon, and was of the opinion that it was how the bombs were employed that counted rather than the yield of their warheads. - Untitled MM/SM(62)4 24 May 1962 AIR 19/1084 UKNA. For more information on the classification of British nuclear warhead design and the particulars of tactical vs. strategic nuclear weapons as it applied to the UK see R. Moore, 'British nuclear warhead design, 1958-1966: How much American Help?*' Defence Studies,* 4 (2004) pp 209-210. The distinction is important for Anglo-American relations as Washington considered tactical nuclear weapons as an 'uneconomical sideshow'. - Letter to Directors JIB (MoD) from RJ Reid 25 June 1963 DEFE 7/2236 UKNA. This is likely attributable to their experience in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia where high explosive tactical weapons (if conventional rather than nuclear) failed to change the course of the conflict. - See Annex to Letter in the same file.

[13] G. Perkovich *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact of Global Proliferation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001) p 170 – Note that Perkovich explains how written records of policy deliberations in the lead-up to the detonation of the device were not kept, and indeed the final decision to test the device came after the test had finished.

[14] This was to be a 'cold test' using a depleted uranium core, as there was not enough enriched uranium available. The amount of enriched uranium necessary would not be available until 1980. - O .Rabinotwiz, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests: Washington and its Cold War deals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p 113

[15] Cabinet Conclusions D(57)10 18th November 1957 CAB 131/18 UKNA

to take unilateral action on which items to be cut back in order to bring a balance between expenditure and available funds but leave this for the joint [Anglo-American] review.'[16]

The surge in the availability and interest in the US as a supplier for military materials had mixed success across the Commonwealth. Canada was most enthuasiastic, especially given their increasingly close links to the US since 1947. Australia, and New Zealand were more hesitant at times, possibly reluctant to avoid offending the UK. South Africa found it increasingly difficult to source military equipment from third countries, including the US, as a result of ongoing international outcry over its domestic policies. The UK, although willing and even enthusiastic about purchasing equipment off-the-shelf from the US, was torn. The British government's desire was for the Commonwealth to favour UK products even when suitable and cheaper US alternatives were available.[17] The reality was that the UK could no longer supply the Commonwealth with the exorbitantly expensive and technically advanced equipment that was required.[18] Although the UK did not agree to avoid the duplication of research on account of costs until much later, the economic position of Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand never allowed for anything other than that approach. For Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand the need to obtain military equipment from another country was often the only realistic option available. An interest expressed in UK or US military equipment during the design phase was often key to ensuring that requirements were met and costs were kept low.

The TSR-2, a particularly ill-fated plane capable of carrying Red Beard tactical nuclear warheads, was one example of how a UK project was dropped due to rising costs in favour of a US plane: the F-111. The F-111 was not a plane without its flaws, which included spiralling costs. More worryingly for Australia, the export version of the F-111 was not as advanced an aircraft as the TSR-2 –

[16] 'Visit by JE Serby, Deputy Controller of Guided Weapons, and Dr. HM Wilson, Director-General Defence Research Staff, to A Robinson Assistant Director of Defence R&D, Department of Defence 16 May 1962 DEFE 7 UKNA – This report demonstrated a thorough exchange of ideas between the American and British R&D establishments and demonstrated the desire, on both sides, to avoid a duplication of research effort across the board. Although the emphasis was placed on the British effort not being spread 'too thinly' there was some discussion, if the research effort was more concentrated, of the American Department of Defence sourcing material from the UK. Despite these indications in practice this was never a realistic prospect. Although there were some attempts made such as the FN FAL (styled as the L1A1 in the Commonwealth), but these were not successful.

[17] Telegram from CRO to MoD re: Meeting with Titterton, 31st July 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA

[18] By the mid-1950s there were increasingly serious deficiencies in some members of the Commonwealth with respect to a wide variety of military stores, and it was considered that these deficiencies could not be rectified from existing sources (i.e. the UK). A suggestion that Australia be allowed access to US military assistance was refused as it 'would not meet eligibility requirements' but discussions to see what could be achieved were agreed. - Letter from the Prime Minister of the UK to the High Commissioner (Australia) to the UK re: Discussion with US Authority on Defence in South-East Asia 25 April 1955 – Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference London 1956 – Defence Brief A1209 box 446 ANA

or even as advanced as the variant of the F-111 used by the US. The particular version sold to the Australian government lacked the Mark II navigation/fire-control system, making it decidedly inferior to the TSR-2.[19] Although US projects became increasingly commonplace from the 1960s onwards, the situation was much more fluid in this field than in nuclear weapons development, not least because of the substantially greater availability of weapon systems and procurement possibilities. The F-111 debacle was indicative of growing openness in Australia to defence hardware sourced from the US. Although this shift was mirrored by the UK, Canadian and New Zealand procurement policies differed somewhat in their approach. Canada had already adopted the widespread introduction of conventional US equipment for its armed forces. At the other end of the scale, New Zealand operated British equipment long after the 1960s. New Zealand aircraft and warships were designed and built in the UK with only a few exceptions. Indeed the Royal New Zealand Navy did not operate a non-British warship until 1989, although there were earlier exceptions in aircraft procurement, such as the US-built A4 Skyhawk.[20] South Africa, meanwhile, faced very different problems. After the imposition of an arms embargo the South African domestic arms industry grew considerably, and its primary effect was the fine-tuning and refitting of existing British designs, especially the Oliphant tank – effectively a series of heavily modified British-designed Centurion tanks.[21]

In the late 1950s with the cancellation of the TSR-2 it became clear that Australia's interest in certain projects was insufficient to ensure the continued funding of UK defence projects. Any influence New Zealand may have had in this respect would certainly have fallen short of Australia's, if only on the basis of economics. This was particularly problematic for New Zealand which was heavily dependent on external sources for its military equipment. It was unsurprising, then, that the RNZAF was comprised almost entirely of British planes until the purchase of the US A-4 Skyhawks. This, however, was not as significant a break from the UK on procurement issues as it may first appear. New Zealand purchased UK BAC Strikemasters in 1972, and the specifics of the Skyhawk selection point to a set of circumstances which indicated a mismatch of need and capabilities between New Zealand and the UK.[22] Significant time was provided to explore potential replacements for New Zealand's ageing aircraft in the lead up to the A-4 Skyhawk purchase. This purchase was a compromise driven

[19] 15 Ministry of Defence Review, Equipment Working Group, Annex B, Section IV Air 19/1015 DRE/P(65) UKNA

[20] J. Singleton, 'Vampires to Skyhawks: Military Aircraft and Frigate Purchases by New Zealand 1950-70' *Australian Economic History Review* 42 (2002) p 201

[21] This was possible only due to the large number of Centurion tanks already in South Africa. - J. Moore, *South Africa and Nuclear Proliferation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p 68

predominately by economic issues. Indeed the Skyhawk had initially been reviewed and rejected as a potential replacement for the RNZAF's Vampires. With a maximum expenditure available of NZ$25 million the preferred options – the Mirage IIoA (a French aircraft also operated by Australia), and the F-4 Phantom or the F-5 Freedom Fighter (both US planes) – were too expensive per plane to form a credible force within the available budget.[23] The selection of the Skyhawk was therefore on the basis of cost and logistical support which was readily available from Australia which also operated the Skyhawk.

Another particularly interesting aspect of conventional weapons development was the introduction of a new battle rifle for the Commonwealth during the 1960s: the L1A1. Notably, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK all continued to use the L1A1 (more commonly recognised as the Commonwealth variant of the FN FAL), until the 1970s and 1980s.[24] The implications of this are offset somewhat by the fact that the entirety of NATO was to use the FN FAL while the US preferred the US-developed M14 which had a larger calibre than the FN FAL. Nevertheless, events conspired that resulted in the continuation of the Commonwealth using the same rifle in the post-war period, even when it had endeavoured to adapt to a US standard.

Joint Commonwealth research efforts

Defence research amongst the Commonwealth was not a process undertaken with equal vigour and towards similar objectives on all sides. The usefulness of a joint Commonwealth defence research project was as often driven by a lack of options as much as any commitment to a specifically Commonwealth effort. This was true even when amongst the Commonwealth research endeavours. That is not to say that they did not collaborate on defence research. The British identified that they could no longer afford to have any 'duplication of effort' if it could be avoided.[25] However, there was not any attachment to a Commonwealth research project of any type. This is particularly important to

[22] No British aircraft was considered purely because that there was no available British alternative. The RAF aircraft to serve in this role, the joint Anglo-French Jaguar, would not be available until the 1970s. - Combat aircraft for the RNZAF 2 December 1966 AAFD811, W3738 228/3/1 CP(66)996 ANZ. Also see G. Bentley, & M. Conley, *Portrait of an Air Force* (Wellington: Grantham House, 1987) p 193 for more detail on the purchase of the Strikemasters.

[23] See J. Singleton, 'Vampires to Skyhawks: Military Aircraft and Frigate Purchases by New Zealand 1950-70' *Australian Economic History Review* 42 (2002) p 195 for the maximum available expenditure, and also Combat aircraft for the RNZAF 2 December 1966 AAFD811, W3738 228/3/1 CP(66)996 ANZ for options considered.

[24] Memorandum on Expert Committee established in pursuance of Security Council Resolution 5773 2 November 1964 MV-B 2/213 SANDFA

[25] Cabinet Conclusions D(57)10 18th November 1957 CAB 131/18 UKNA

consider in light of the end goal of defence research: procurement. It would be impossible to accurately detail the importance of defence research without also looking at the equipment that was subsequently purchased or manufactured at the end of that research. Although Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK were certainly far from unified on any point of defence research on defence procurement they were much closer. The preference for UK military equipment remained strong, particularly in New Zealand, for many decades after the British decided to avoid the duplication of defence research, but less so in other countries like South Africa and Canada.[26] More problematically other Commonwealth countries had not well-developed arms industries – with notable exception to South Africa. If the key objective in procurement was to secure the cheapest best option available then the Commonwealth was a poor place to start. Two key examples of this are the British TSR-2, and the Anglo-Australian nuclear research project at Woomera. In the same way that the Old Commonwealth sourced its military equipment off-the-shelf from the UK, the UK was now undertaking a similar approach with respect to the US with significant implications for Commonwealth defence cooperation. This change in British policy placed the Commonwealth in a very different position to pre-1947 when it could reliably count on the UK to provide for its military needs.[27]

The UK was engaged in a number of joint Commonwealth research projects, particularly in the field of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. The project at Woomera was one of the most important examples of this cooperation. It represented the very edge of scientific knowledge of the time and the results factored into the development of nuclear weapons.[28] The ill-fated TSR-2 was another and it was indicative of the importance of defence procurement for the Commonwealth. Interest expressed in UK defence projects by the Commonwealth certainly informed the viability of this research. Australia's concerns over whether UK nuclear weapons would fit to RAAF planes, for instance, prompted a near-exasperated response from Whitehall officials who suggested that if the RAAF purchased British planes then this would not be an issue.[29] There was certainly an element of truth to that but that view must surely had as much to do with ensuring that the Commonwealth met their requirements with purchases from the UK than anything else.

---

[26] Meeting of Commonwealth Defence Ministers M.D.M. (51) 4th Meeting, 25 June 1951 MV 217/2 SANDFA

[27] Review of Defence Relationship with the UK 1963; Part IV 'Supply of Military Equipment and Grant of Manufacturing Rights' MV 219/2 SANDFA

[28] 'Some Impressions gained from a recent Visit to Australia in connection with the Maralinga Experiment Project 1963 DO 164/19 WDPC/P/539 HSC/31.23 UNKA

[29] Specifically '...all they [Australian government] needed were the general dimensions and that a dummy war-head would give them all they needed.' - Telegram from CRO to MoD re: Meeting with Titterton, 31st July 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA

The approach by the UK to defence research was, perhaps, clearer in the field of nuclear weapons research. Wayne Reynolds makes the argument that the UK used Australia to further its own research in the field until such time as an opportunity arose to avail of US facilities and expertise.[30] It is argued here that this was part of a broader UK strategy in defence research, a strategy that was driven by a need to cut costs. Projects for national prestige were explicitly ruled out.[31] UK defence research, joint or otherwise, became decidedly goal-orientated. If an alternative presented itself that offered the same result but with cheaper costs, or a better result with similar costs, then taking that option would surely be more appropriate. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth offered some clear benefits to joint defence research projects. It was a useful source of sparsely populated and varied land, skilled personnel, relatable peoples whose governments generally offered a cordial reception, and it was a receptive market to anything the UK developed – either by itself or in conjunction with other Commonwealth countries.[32] The UK took a cold view on such sentimentality. If a better option came along the Commonwealth link was not an insurmountable impediment, but the consequences this posed to Commonwealth relations was something that the UK remained cognisant of during the period.[33]

One of the most significant joint 'Commonwealth' projects in the field of nuclear research was undertaken in Australia at Woomera and Maralinga. Such was the scale of cooperation in this field that the USSR considered Australia to be a nuclear power.[34] Australia consistently pressed for even greater collaboration between themselves and the British throughout the course of the project.[35] It was something of a shock that the UK pulled out of the endeavour.[36] A shock which Australia was keen to express in its disappointment in communications with the UK.[37] The friendly relationship enjoyed

30 W. Reynolds, *Australia's Bid for the Atomic Bomb* (Melbourne University Press, 2000) p 3

31 Cabinet Conclusions D(57)10 19th November 1957 CAB 131/18 UKNA

32 For greater consideration of the basis of such connectivity in the Commonwealth see G. Magee & A. Thompson *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods, and Capital in the British World, c 1850-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

33 Cabinet Conclusions D(58)24 Minute 3 point e CAB 131 UKNA

34 Telegram no. 606 from Commonwealth Relations Office London to Canberra High Commissioner 3 July 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA

35 'Some Impressions gained from a recent Visit to Australia in connection with the Maralinga Experimental Project, 24 December 1963 DO 164/19 WDPC/P/539 HSC/31.23 UKNA

36 Cabinet Conclusions D(58)33 1 October 1958 CAB 131 UKNA

37 Although part of this was disappointment in general, there was also a sense that the Australians were more politically invested in the project and with its cessation there was little more that would be gained from the research and that research fell short of expectations. - Letter from High Commission Canberra to Commonwealth Relations Office 24 December 1963 DO 164/19 UKNA

between the UK and Australia was developed and maintained over the course of the project. It is also important to note that the UK considered Menzies a stabilizing force in Australian politics when it came to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Officials reporting on the Maralinga Experimental Project considered that a 'Liberal-Country Party Coalition not led by Mr Menzies' was 'not unlikely' to join the 'nuclear club', and if Australia developed a nuclear weapons programme in that context then the UK would come under increased pressure to 'give Australia warhead information'.[38]

Anglo-Australian defence research was not always a cosy affair. The ordinarily genial relationship was strained by Australian fears that the UK was not sharing all of the information it gathered from the tests.[39] Other matters were also less cordial. A series of misunderstandings and difficulties surrounding the negotiations for the Bloodhound missile further disturbed Anglo-Australian relations. This was further complicated by the decision to abandon the TSR-2, the development of which the Australians had supported with some interest, and obliged the Royal Australian Air Force to acquire the inferior F-111. Furthermore, the switch from Woomera to the US test range in Nevada did not help the Anglo-Australian relationship.[40] This was an especially sore point given Australian interest in nuclear weapons had been partly based on UK assurances regarding the implications of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.[41] The cumulative effect was that the end of the project left the Australians feeling badly treated. The breakdown of relationships were thought to be eventually resolved 'outside of one or two individuals', but the incident highlighted the strain defence research cooperation had on the Commonwealth connection.[42]

Like Australia, New Zealand was generally agreeable to a working research and defence

---

[38] 'Some impressions gained from a recent Visit to Australia in connection with the Maralinga Experimental Project, 24 December 1963 DO 164 WDPC/P/539 HSC/31.23 UKNA

[39] This was almost certainly true in relation to some specific elements of the results in how they related to the manufacture of the explosive device itself. Concerns were held that 'to give this manufacturing data to Australia would have to be a secret act with the connivance of the Americans. If we [the British government] attempted to make an open exception of Australia the Russians would almost certainly do the same for Indonesia'. - Untitled Report 24 July 1961 DO 164/2NT 37/3 UKNA

[40] Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office to High Commission, Canberra, 11 August 1962 DO 164/19 UKNA

[41] The Australian government felt that, should they sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (which was regarded by both Australia and the UK as 'impractical' to avoid) then the UK would be asked to either 'provide full manufacturing data for operational weapons' or, 'supply ready made weapons to any Australian government if it decided it was faced with foregoing circumstances.' - Telegram No. 606 to Commonwealth Relations Office from Canberra High Commission 30 June 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA. Note that although the Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed until 1968 agreement that such a treaty should exist had been signalled as early as 1961.

[42] Cooperation with Australia in the development of New Weapons 19 July 1960 DO 164 SE(O)C/P(60)25 UKNA

procurement relationship with the UK.[43] Unlike Australia it lacked the necessary resources, skills and technical development to contribute in any significant manner. Although the relationship was close it was not on a par with the Anglo-Australian level of cooperation. In some senses it did not need to be equal to derive much of the same benefits. The security of New Zealand was inherently complemented with the enhanced security of Australia. This was a simple issue of geography and the logistical constraints that applied given the technology of the time.

Unlike Australia, there was significantly less New Zealand involvement on the other major aspect of defence collaboration, nuclear weapons development. New Zealand's need for nuclear weapons, in the face of the threat from South-East Asia and the Far East more generally, was effectively covered by the same plans and operations devoted to Australia. The other side of this is that the ability of New Zealand to contribute to nuclear weapons development was rather more limited. This highlighted a key point; simply because New Zealand was in the Commonwealth, and in close proximity to the likely deployment of nuclear weapons in defence of the Commonwealth, that did not grant it any particular say or inclusion in the development or deployment of nuclear weapons that involved two other members of the Commonwealth with which it shared close ties. The non-involvement of New Zealand did not make it any less of a Commonwealth project – as has been amply demonstrated in previous chapters with respect to conventional force deployment – but the change to a nuclear context altered the approach taken. One particularly poignant example of the more restrictive nature of nuclear weapons research and deployment can be seen in the more distant approach by British officials with respect to engagements with the US on joint nuclear strike plans in the region. In those conversations, British officials told their American counterparts that neither Australia nor New Zealand needed to be included in those plans.[44] It seems clear that many of the assumptions related to conventional force deployment and expected cooperation in the defence of the Commonwealth generally were not extended to decisions regarding nuclear weapons.

In Canada the potential prospects for joint Commonwealth research projects were typically outweighed by the potential that US assistance and research offered. Even where Canada could not be

[43] Indeed Mr. Holland of New Zealand was given to committing that 'New Zealand would procure as much equipment as she could afford from the UK' at a meeting held amongst the Old Commonwealth on 8 June 1953. - Minutes of a meeting held at 10 Downing Street 3 June 1953 MG26L Volume 85 File 0-16-21 PMM(53) LAC. Note that this was held almost immediately after the conclusion of a larger pan-Commonwealth meeting on economic issues that had included India, Pakistan, and Ceylon.

[44] Annex to COS(62)66 13 November 1962 DEFE 11/319 UKNA

involved with defence research projects, it was invariably covered by the fruits of those labours on account of their geographic location. It was impossible for the US, for instance, to consider the threat of the USSR without also considering Canada, which included such things as regular arctic flights and submarine patrols to Canada's north.[45] Just as Australia's defence of its northern territory protected New Zealand by proxy, the same conclusion can be drawn between the US and Canada. However, unlike New Zealand Canada had the capacity to engage with the US in research, development and manufacturing. Moreover its geopolitical placement between the US and the USSR left it in a better position for its engagement to be more of an issue than New Zealand's location provided for with respect to Australia and the UK. This helps explain how the most senior of the Dominions had almost the least involvement with Commonwealth defence research.[46]

Canada's circumstances were quite similar to the strategy the UK adopted for defence research, and presented a fundamental question: why commit to a Commonwealth project when there was a better option available? There was no compelling argument made for that question in any key Commonwealth country. Unlike matters of defence cooperation more generally, it appeared that defence research and procurement was propelled by self-interest and economics. In order for Commonwealth defence research to have succeeded it needed to seriously compete with the available alternatives. It seems clear that it could not.

South Africa's engagement in nuclear defence research was limited, as may be expected given its particular circumstances as a near pariah on the international scene. Over the period concerned it constructed its own nuclear reactors albeit with US rather than Commonwealth assistance. This enabled it to develop nuclear weapons on its own before eventually dismantling them.

Arms sales

Although certainly the development of the technology was a key consideration, some attention should be spared for the sale of that technology in its finished form. Whereas research was an issue which affected all five key Commonwealth countries to varying degrees, all were thoroughly involved in procurement processes.

---

[45] By 1962 between 25 and 44 Soviet ICBM, 97 ballistic missiles, and 155 heavy bombers could target the US by flying across the Arctic region. - T. Botti, *Ace in the Hole: Why the US did not use Nuclear Weapons in the Cold War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996) p 185

[46] Meeting of Commonwealth defence ministers M.D.M. (51) 1st Meeting, 21 June 1951 MV 217/2 SANDFA

Greater understanding of how Commonwealth defence research developed can be gleaned from an analysis of the procurement strategies employed by Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and the UK when it came to conventional military equipment. In the early post-war years almost all were effectively entirely supplied by British-manufactured (and largely designed as well) aircraft, ships and other military hardware. UK designs fell out of favour in the 1960s as military hardware was replaced and foreign competitors, particularly the US, were considered with greater interest than ever before. This was partly on account of economic pressures in the UK, but also in the Dominions. The UK struggled to maintain the same level of sophistication and economy of scale in the new technological environment. The increased variety naturally undermined the uniformity of the Old Commonwealth's military equipment. Although New Zealand's planes, ships and equipment may have remained almost entirely British until well into the 1980s, the same cannot be said of Australian, Canadian, and South African equipment. Australian concerns in the 1960s that British-built nuclear weapons could not be carried by Australian-owned but US-designed planes and ships revealed some of these tensions.[47] Canadian and South African concerns were far less prominent, but no less destabilising. Canada was able to more easily leverage its position with the US to good effect, while South Africa was obliged as a result of an unfavourable diplomatic climate to forge ahead with its own armaments industry.

This resulted in the clear and steady degradation of anything resembling a coherent procurement and research basis for Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and the UK. This was a stark contrast to the situation in 1947 where much of the military equipment owned and operated by those countries was British in origin. Although the link between those countries and British military equipment was maintained for some time thereafter the economic pressures on the UK obliged a reduction in their capability to sustain research and development for all of the projects necessary to maintain an entire arsenal of weapon types. This was especially problematic as all of these projects had US competitors, and US research and design was urged on by a far better economic situation and political climate which encouraged active defence research. The decision made by the British cabinet in 1957 to forgo the duplication of research effectively signalled the reduction in the Commonwealth's ability to equip its forces with Commonwealth-built and researched technology.[48] As US technology

[47] Telegram from CRO to MoD re: Meeting with Titterton, 31st July 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA
[48] Cabinet Conclusions D(57)10 18th November 1957 CAB 131/18 UKNA

replaced ageing British equipment it became increasingly difficult to see how cooperation in defence research could be restarted.

Although there was universal interest in US variants the process of replacing existing UK designs with US versions was far from uniform. Even the UK decision to avoid duplication of research does not provide a definitive cut-off point given the employment of British aircraft and ships elsewhere in the Commonwealth until well into the 1980s. This highlighted the weakened role of the UK as the primary supplier of military goods and equipment to the Commonwealth as a whole. Note that there were ongoing efforts to secure arms sales to pay for defence research in the UK, even to South Africa. The UK supplied South Africa with ships and other major elements of military hardware to secure their external borders, rather than for internal defence, until 1964. This ended following the conclusion of the Simonstown agreement and its associated contracts which provided naval warships and the Buccaneer naval bomber for the South African Air Force had been finalised.[49] The UK's interest in South Africa's ability to guard its coastal waters, since access to the Suez was now more complicated, appear to have taken precedence over diplomatic concerns. Part of the agreement to return Simonstown to South Africa was predicated on the assurance that South Africa purchased six anti-submarine frigates, ten coastal minesweepers and four seaward defence boats from the UK.[50] This built on an established pattern of South Africa purchase of Royal Navy ships since the end of the Second World War.[51] It was not until 1970 that South Africa obtained warships from a country other than the UK with the purchase of three Daphne-class submarines from France.[52]

South African interest in joint Commonwealth military research was sporadic at best and, even then, often problematic. South African military hardware was, more often than not, of British manufacture and design. South Africa's attitude towards Commonwealth research projects was hindered by the problems it faced from the New Commonwealth. Their attitude towards South Africa was something that had a very tangible influence on South Africa and on those who may have been inclined to assist South Africa for strategic reasons, like the UK.

---

49 Note from Watkinson to Prime Minister 17 November 1964 MV-B 2/219 SANDFA

50 Simonstad 'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the UK June 1955' Annex Anglo-South Africa Defence Agreement MV 190 SANDFA

51 Memorandum on the Expansion of the South African Navy 11 February 1955 MV-B 2/219 SANDFA

52 Cabinet Memorandum 22 September 1965 MV-B 2/213 DC.2490/34 SANDFA

Anglo-Australian nuclear research

The joint nuclear research programme between Australia and the UK, known as the Maralinga Experimental Project, was pursued at Maralinga and Woomera between 1955 and 1963.[53] This joint project developed long-range missiles and tested nuclear warheads with the aim of introducing the nuclear-armed, long-range missile Blue Streak. The programme has been covered in some detail in other research and the Anglo-Australian connection given even more consideration in recent years.[54] Anglo-Australian cooperation in this field was unique in comparison to the other Commonwealth nations and only surpassed by Anglo-American cooperation. Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand did not enjoy the same level of exposure to nuclear technology that the UK shared with Australia. Canada's relationship with the US was relatively superficial in terms of the development of nuclear weapons. Although South Africa eventually developed its own nuclear weapon this was not on the back of Commonwealth assistance. Meanwhile New Zealand had little nuclear weapons development experience in any capacity.

Anglo-Australian cooperation in nuclear testing occurred well before the formal opening of the project in 1955 with low-yield nuclear bombs tested on Monte Bello Island off the north-west coast of Australia in 1952.[55] A series of tests followed the formal establishment of the new testing grounds at Woomera in 1955. More significant tests Operations Buffalo and Antler in 1956 and 1957 respectively successfully trialled a series of low-yield atomic bombs. These tests assessed the effectiveness of non-nuclear explosions on nuclear weapons and the development of nuclear technology, which included advancements as new as neutron initiators, were carried out until 1963. A view formed in the UK government by late 1958 following the successful test of thermonuclear warheads on Christmas Island in the middle of the Pacific that the expense of nuclear research in Australia was too high. It made increasingly less sense to use inferior Australian facilities given that the US was now willing to offer the UK access to their test sites and data.[56] The UK switched to the US reluctantly, and the effect that the closure and cessation of nuclear research cooperation with the Australians had on Anglo-Australian

[53] Some Impressions gained from a recent Visit to Australia in connection with the Maralinga Experimental Programme 24th December 1963 DO 164/19 WDPC/P/539 HSC/31.23 UKNA

[54] This has, in part, been driven by the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded UK Nuclear Weapons History project at the Mountbatten Centre. A combination of a reinvigorated scholarly research coupled with the opening of a great number of archival sources in the UK and elsewhere has resulted in a spike in British nuclear research, and particularly its international aspects as they relate to Australia and the US.

[55] I. Badash. *A Nuclear Winter's Tale* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2009) p 259

[56] Cabinet Conclusions D(58)33 1 October 1958 CAB 131/19 UKNA

relations was fully appreciated amongst UK officials.[57]

Comparisons of inter-Commonwealth defence research are made easier by the fact that few amongst the Commonwealth cooperated with each other without UK involvement. There was little joint research between Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand. In terms of defence research and procurement, the hub and spoke model that symbolised Commonwealth defence cooperation did not have a rim connecting those spokes.

US-Commonwealth nuclear developments

The deployment of US nuclear weaponry on Canadian soil warrants consideration of US-Canadian military relations since 1947. In 1951 a series of joint US-Canadian early warning bases were established north of the US-Canadian border: the Pinetree line. This was quickly overtaken by a series of Canadian operated warning bases half-way between the American-Canadian border and the northernmost edge of Canadian territory in the Arctic Circle: the Mid-Canada line. In 1954 another series of US-Canadian bases were manned at the northernmost edge of Canada along the Arctic Circle: the Distant Early Warning line.[58] These developments led to the Canadian government's eventual acceptance of the deployment of US nuclear weapons at Goose Bay, Canada in late 1963/early 1964.[59] Previously the Canadian government had allowed the base at Goose Bay to be used for refuelling purposes only. No nuclear weapons were to be stored, assembled, nor attached to aircraft or other delivery systems stationed there. Unlike South Africa, Canada had little interest in developing nuclear weapons. The weapons that were placed in Canada were attached to close-range ground-to-ground launchers or for aerial defence. They were, in essence, tactical nuclear weapons designed with the purpose of destroying other nuclear weapons in flight or conventional forces seeking to capture the base. Their offensive capabilities were significantly less than the Anglo-Australian Blue Streak missile or the South African warheads which were placed upon bombers or a missile.

South African involvement with the Commonwealth in terms of nuclear weapons research, or

---

57 Cabinet Conclusions D(58)18 10 September 1958 CAB 131/19 UKNA

58 The Distant Early Warning Line was expected to require approximately one thousand people to keep it in operation, and for these purposes American and Canadian forces were pooled together. An American General was head of the integrated operational command, and the Chief of the Canadian Air Staff was the deputy commander. - Weekly Intelligence Summary General Staff Intelligence Committee Summary no. 31/57 6 September 1957 MV 208/151. See also Canadian government white paper: Canada's Defence Programme 1956-57 (Ottawa: Queen's Printers, 1956)

59 J. Clearwater, *US Nuclear Weapons in Canada* (Toronto: Kirk Howard, 1999) p 132

nuclear power research for that matter, was effectively non-existent. The earliest efforts to involve South Africa in nuclear research in any way was US interest in imports of uranium from South African mines.[60] In 1958 the US provided assistance to South Africa with an agreement to deliver a functioning nuclear research reactor, which eventually arrived in 1965 at Pelindaba (SAFARI-1). This was quickly followed by a domestically built reactor in 1967 (SAFARI-2). South Africa subsequently ordered the second reactor to be closed in 1969 to concentrate its limited resources, such as in its uranium enrichment programme. This culminated in South African participation in the US Ploughshare programme from 1971.[61] The goal of that programme was to focus South African nuclear expertise on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions: explosions designed to create harbours, canals and other major infrastructure. Their application also covered the destruction of chemical weaponry, extinguishing fires started in natural gas deposits and similar non-military purposes. It was unclear precisely when South Africa ordered that the development of these bombs was to change from peaceful purposes to military use. It would seem reasonable to suggest that some time between 1974 and 1977 a change was made towards the creation of a stockpile of nuclear weapons for military purposes with accompanying delivery systems. Whatever the specific date what is clear is that Commonwealth engagement with South Africa in the development of nuclear weapons was non-existent. At no point did Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the UK have any desire to develop South African nuclear expertise for any purpose, peaceful or otherwise. Much of South Africa's initial nuclear expertise came from the US, and their willingness to help South Africa develop nuclear devices for peaceful purposes led to the creation of military grade nuclear weapons, a fact the US later recognised.[62]

The sale of British Buccaneer bomber aircraft to South Africa was an intriguing development in that context. The Buccaneer was designed with a maritime strike role in mind, armed with missiles and up to 4,000 lbs of ordnance. The South African Air Force received a number of these as part of the agreement regarding the Simonstown naval base in early 1963.[63] The Buccaneer was designed to act as

[60] The importance of South Africa as a trading partner in this regard cannot be overstated. By 1954 South Africa was the world's single largest supplier of uranium. - Annex 'USA interests in South Africa' to Notes of a discussion at the State Department on 9 November 1955 between Minister of Defence Erasmus and Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and Africa Affairs George Allen MV 128/8 Minister en Geselskap 1955 Beoek aan Italie, Engeland, VSA en Portugal SANDFA

[61] J. Moore, *South Africa and Nuclear Proliferation: South Africa's Nuclear Capabilities and Intentions in the Context of Non-proliferation Policies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p 83

[62] F.V. Pabian, 'South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme: Lessons for US Non-proliferation policy' *The Nonproliferation Review* 3 (1995) p 2

[63] Letter from J. Maud to J. Fouche Minister of Defence relaying message from P. Thorneycroft 14 August 1962 MV-B 2/217 SANDFA

a maritime strike aircraft but also that it was to be able to act as a nuclear strike aircraft capable of carrying the unguided Red Beard or WE.177 tactical nuclear weapons in its bomb-bay. The vast majority, if not the entirety, of bombers developed by the UK between 1950 and 1970 such as the planned TSR-2, the English Electric Canberra, the Buccaneer, and many others were all designed to be capable of carrying nuclear bombs of some calibre.[64] It should also be considered that the UK, in the mid-1950s, did not believe that South Africa was one of the countries capable of developing nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future.[65] The South African nuclear programme did not develop with a viable nuclear weapon until the 1980s, by which time the Buccaneers would have well passed their prime. In effect, the South Africans possessed the capability to deliver nuclear warheads, but had not acquired the bombs themselves – even if they were rapidly increasing their capability in that regard through cooperation with the US. In many ways, this places South Africa in a similar position to Australia. The UK had, in 1956, reassured Australia that it could not foresee a situation in a global war where the UK would not supply Australia with nuclear weapons.[66] No such assurances were given to South Africa and the strategic and political considerations made it unlikely that the UK would go through with a transfer of nuclear weapons to South Africa in any context.

This also prompts a question about the intended purpose for military-applicable research and procurement versus the actual purpose for which that technology was used. In the case of the Buccaneer, the intended purpose of the aircraft was as a maritime strike craft with a nuclear capability while its actual purpose related solely to its primary role as a maritime strike aircraft. US assistance in developing South Africa's potential to generate nuclear power was similar. Although the intended purpose for that research was civilian in nature, the actual purpose for which that technology was used had a more military inclination. US cooperation with Commonwealth countries in military matters warrants some consideration. Australia, Canada, and New Zealand eventually switched their primary research and procurement partner from the UK to the US. Curiously, South Africa was the only one of the five who engaged in substantially more diversification of its supply base, no doubt necessitated by its difficult internal political situation and this negatively affected its ability to reliably source material

[64] See Appendix 1 in Holdstock D., & Barnaby F. *The British nuclear weapons programme 1952-2002* (London: Frank Cass, 2005) p 145

[65] Untitled Report BND (SG)(59)19 31 December 1959 PREM 11/2945 UKNA

[66] In fact Eden went even further and declared to the American Administration that '… the same criteria [regarding nuclear proliferation] could not be applied to Australia as to other non-Commonwealth countries on the question of atomic cooperation'. Telegram from Foreign Office to Washington Embassy, 9 July 1956 EG1/115 UKNA

from any one country.[67] It is ironic that US cooperation with South Africa led to the development of nuclear weapons in that country while the same cooperation was refused to Australia who, given their cooperation with the UK, were further along that path. Instead of ensuring the support and development of nuclear weapons in one politically safe territory which the USSR largely regarded as a nuclear power already.[68] US assistance in the development of peaceful nuclear research allowed a different country, one not politically safe nor recognised by the USSR as a nuclear power, to develop nuclear weapons.

This was not the only instance where this occurred. Canadian nuclear reactors were sold to India which commenced operation in 1960. While these were designed for peaceful purposes and research it led to the eventual creation of a weapons-grade device in 1974. This was field-tested as a Peaceful Nuclear Explosion 'Smiling Buddha'.[69] The same criticism that could be levelled against US-South African assistance works for Canada-India and strikes rather closer to home.

Conclusion

It is impossible to talk about Commonwealth cooperation in research and procurement without also addressing the involvement of the US. Increasingly after 1945 British military equipment included models that were of US design and manufacture. This had a detrimental affect on the ability of the other Commonwealth nations to maintain a cohesive, Commonwealth focused military research and procurement operation. There are two aspects to this; US-driven nuclear weapons research and procurement, and US competition in conventional weapons procurement. The former relates more so to the Anglo-Australian-American relationship than to any other combination, with particularly important aspects to this found in the McMahon Act and the US – UK Agreement of 1958.[70] Conventional weapons procurement, in contrast, had a much broader application that affected the entirety of the Commonwealth. One of the more interesting examples of US involvement in conventional weapons procurement was the FN FAL battle rifle. Here internal US interests caused the US to adopt the M14

---

67 Memorandum for Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 'Overseas visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs to Italy, 30 September 1964', 1 October 1964 MV-B 2/213 SANDFA

68 Telegram from CRO to Canberra no. 606 3 July 1961 DO 164/17 UKNA

69 It is interesting to note that India would not test another device for another twenty-four years. It has been suggested that no further tests were carried out because of the potential such undertaking would have on the possibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty which was only four years old. - B. Karnad, *India's Nuclear Policy* (London: Praeger Security International, 2008) p 54

70 Cmnd 537 'Agreement... for co-operation on the uses of atomic energy for mutual defence purposes' (London: HMSO, 1958)

rifle instead. A Commonwealth pattern FN FAL, the L1A1 was developed for the Commonwealth. Cooperation in procurement and standardisation while increasingly common was still subject to domestic political considerations.

Anglo-American nuclear relations were complicated from 1946 after the US put limits on the amount of information it released to other countries relating to nuclear weapons development.[71] This was amended in 1954 to allow for the trade of information relating to nuclear technology for civilian purposes, such as power generation. It was not until 1958 that the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement provided for the trade of information of military-grade nuclear technology to the UK. This included the use of the Nevada testing grounds in the US and the transfer of plutonium (although it was expected that there would be certain strings attached to this deal).[72] Wayne Reynolds links the fall-off of nuclear testing in Australia with the increased access to US facilities. The decreased presence and interest in Woomera was matched with increased involvement in US testing sites. It is a compelling argument that the burden of having two nuclear testing programmes was simply unsustainable by the UK. Thus British involvement in the Australian project was ended in favour of British involvement in US testing. In this sense, the capabilities that could be offered by the US had a detrimental effect on the Commonwealth pursuing Commonwealth-based research and designs.

However, the decline in Anglo-Australian cooperation was not as rapid nor as instant as might be assumed. Certainly up until 1963 there was strong UK support for the defence of the Commonwealth with the use of nuclear weapons, even if that defence came in the 'soft power' that nuclear weapons imbued.[73] Furthermore, there was a significant delay between defence research and the introduction of that capability into the field. This was especially true of nuclear weapons. One of the last 'Commonwealth' nuclear bombs the British designed, built, and tested in the Commonwealth, was the Red Beard tactical nuclear bomb. It was designed in 1952 and tested in Australia in Operation Buffalo in late 1956. It was subsequently stored at RAF Tengah in addition to being stationed in

---

71 For more on these limitations see M. Goodman, 'The Anglo-American Atomic Intelligence Partnership, 1945-1958' *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 18 (2003) p 155

72 Cabinet Conclusions D(58)32 16 July 1958 CAB 131/20 UKNA

73 It was considered that the use of nuclear weapons in a war would only be undertaken if 'the US was in [the war] too.' It was further thought that the UK possessing nuclear weapons would increase their influence 'with certain members of the Commonwealth, particularly Australia and New Zealand'. It is also important to note in this regard that, although the Middle East saw deployment of tactical nuclear weapons only, the Far East would see both tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. - Military strategy for circumstances short of global war 1960 – 1970. JP(60)16 Appendix B 'A Study on Nuclear Weapons' by the Joint Planning Staff 28 June 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA

Cyprus, in the UK and aboard aircraft carriers from 1962 until 1970.[74] The bombs themselves held a two-fold purpose – initially they were to deter China and Indonesia.[75] They were also used to ensure access to US strategic nuclear strike plans.[76] Eventually British nuclear weapons in the region formed part of the nuclear component for SEATO Plan 4.[77] It is interesting to note that there were no strike plans for British nuclear weapons in South-East Asia until after they had been incorporated into US strike plans.[78] Red Beard's replacement, WE.177, which became operationally active in 1970, was based on US designs and assistance from the late 1950s onwards. The transition period from Australian- to American- based cooperation in nuclear military between 1958-1963 did not have an immediate effect. The nuclear weapons developed and tested in conjunction with Australia lasted for years after 1963, the last date of Anglo-Australian tests. Similarly, the cancellation of Skybolt and the subsequent Nassau Agreement in 1962 did not result in the Royal Navy operating the US Polaris missile until 1968.[79] This effectively resulted in a curious situation where for ten to twelve years after the UK ended cooperation with Australia they operated and deployed weaponry which had been developed in conjunction with Australia. The period between 1958 and 1963 can be seen as a turning point in Anglo-Australian nuclear weapons research, certainly, but it was definitely not an end to the deployment of the results of that research.

The overall picture of Commonwealth defence research cooperation is more than a little misshapen. Although there were clear differences amongst the Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK, a link between all of them certainly existed. The UK initially acted as a key supply

---

74 Letter from Chiefs of Staff to Minister of Defence, 12 November 1963 DEFE 11/319 UKNA

75 The use of nuclear weapons against the Indonesians had been considered, but did not gain any traction. - Annex to COS (63) 29 November 1963 DEFE 11/364 UKNA. Also see Minute from Minister of Defence Peter Thorneycroft for the Prime Minister Dispatch of V-Bombers to the Far East 27 November 1963 PREM11 27/11 UKNA.

76 There was great interest in the UK that it would be in a position to deter Chinese aggression, and there was an outstanding concern that there was a 'case for them [nuclear weapons in the Far East] on grounds of morale and because the prestige of the UK land forces might suffer if we did not have these weapons' - Military strategy for circumstances short of global war 1960 – 1970. JP(60)16 Appendix B 'A Study on Nuclear Weapons' by the Joint Planning Staff 28 June 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA

77 Not only did these weapons provide access to American plans for the region, but they were directly incorporated into the planning itself as well. - Annex to COS 339(63) 12th December 1963 DEFE 11/319 UKNA

78 The commander of the British carrier in the Far East, although armed with nuclear weapons, confessed that he had no idea what targets his bombs were to strike in the event that the UK was struck with nuclear weapons. - Letter from Captain Lee copied to Colonel Cochas, Ministry of Defence, 11 October 1960 DEFE 7/2090 UKNA. This had been part of an ongoing difficulty that the UK had decided to avoid committing to any targets in the absence of direction and guidance from the US. See Chiefs of Staff Meetiing COS(60)252 26 February 1960 DEFE 7/2190 UKNA

79 See Minute by Ministry of Defence 'Skybolt' 23 July 1963 PREM11 PM/63/100 UKNA for the Nassau agreement, and Permanent Secretary to Chief of Air Staff 'Polaris' 16 June 1960 DO 169/5159 UKNA for deployment of the Polaris missile.

and research centre for the Commonwealth, but between 1947 and 1970 that reliance was reduced. Partly this was due to US involvement, which is certainly true for Canada, and partly because the UK could no longer afford to provide the widespread selection of research and development that it had in the past, especially not if there was another option readily available.

The decline of joint Commonwealth defence research between 1949 and 1981 was unsurprising. It has been argued that the reasons for this were largely economic in nature, but it was also driven by a variety of domestic political interests unique to each country. The UK was concerned about the potentially wasted investment that would arise in the event of a duplication of research, and approached defence research with an almost mercenary-like attitude with thought for, but little action to mitigate, the consequences of that policy. Australia too pursued a similar strategy, and was only more Commonwealth-centric in that those relationships – and specifically its relationship with the UK – was more likely to provide the results it desired than any other. Indeed at least until 1956 it was assured of a supply of nuclear weapons from the UK in the event of war. Canada's close proximity to the US, and its position relative to the USSR, gave it an envious position in terms of reaping the benefits of technology designed to defend against a nuclear strike – one it was unlikely to squander by pursuing defence research with the UK or Australia when both of those countries were trying to obtain the level of access that the Canadians already enjoyed. South Africa maintained a variety of military hardware that would have been familiar to the rest of the Commonwealth in spite of arms embargoes thanks to arms sales that accompanied the Simonstown naval base agreement, and the growth of an indigenous arms industry which focused on the heavy modification of existing designs – which were all British. That is the key point in the continuation of a Commonwealth connection in terms of defence research. While there was a decline in the UK as the primary supplier of the Commonwealth's military needs, and an accompanying decrease in the uniformity of equipment amongst the Commonwealth, in practice this happened at a far slower pace than the dates of such policies indicated.

Chapter six: Commonwealth cooperative efforts 1971 – 1982

Introduction

This chapter outlines how Commonwealth defence cooperation was reforged throughout the 1970s and culminated in the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force Rhodesia in 1980. It examines how pre-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation adapted to new political circumstances. It details how the formal and expanded Commonwealth acted from 1971 and drove the changes that manifested in the deployment of an internal policing force in a fellow Commonwealth country. Finally it highlights the perseverance of Commonwealth defence cooperation throughout the 1970s and beyond, while acknowledging the fundamental changes that it faced. It argues that the 1970s was a decade in which the rapid expansion of the Commonwealth made a lasting mark on Commonwealth defence cooperation. It suggests that while the overall Commonwealth response to a continuation of pre-1971 defence cooperation was mixed, Commonwealth defence cooperation enjoyed significant successes in South-East Asia. This is framed in the context of the Commonwealth as a collective taking a commanding role in the future development of Commonwealth defence cooperation, but doing so in a way that did not fundamentally threaten the substance of pre-1971 defence cooperation even if it obliged some superficial changes. This argument is explored in the chapter by pointing to the importance of the 1971 Singapore Declaration and what that suggested for the future development of Commonwealth defence cooperation. It highlights the changes in how the Commonwealth operated, as well as the reaction of older Commonwealth defence cooperation in response to these changes. Finally it notes the individual responses by Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK to these developments. It concludes by marking the deployment of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force Rhodesia as a key turning point in the progress of the Commonwealth to showcase how the changed organisation saw the role of defence cooperation amongst its own members.

The 1970s was a period of great change for the UK and many of the Commonwealth countries. The withdrawal from east of the Suez had profound implications for British military strategy.[1] The announcement of the Guam doctrine by the US ended any hope that the new regional approach would fully and entirely replace the globally-orientated strategy that had been a hallmark of the defensive

[1] Ironically British contingency planning in the 1960s had been built around the loss of access to either or both of the bases in both Singapore and/or Malaya. Indeed there was a presumption that they would be lost, and the committee formed to investigate this entire situation was specifically precluded from offering commentary on if access to the bases remained viable. - Scott Committee Report on the Defence Questions relating to South-East Asia in paras 9(a) and 11 of D(60)33 25 September 1960 DEFE 7 UKNA

arrangements of the British empire and the Commonwealth.[2] The retreat of the UK and the US radically changed the strategic situation in the 1970s. It spurred the retrenchment of various Commonwealth countries towards a much more localised defence. This resulted in a reduction in the scale of support for regional endeavours and created a scenario in which there were extremely limited opportunities for continued engagement, and little political appetite for such endeavours either. In its place was an increased focus on national defence, a surge in peace-keeping efforts, the causes for which often had their roots in issues surrounding decolonisation, and an increased interest in the internal policies of other Commonwealth countries.

The deployment of the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force to Rhodesia marked a particularly important milestone in the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation. Its formation was indicative of the new type of Commonwealth defence cooperation which arose following decolonisation and the more diverse nature of the constituent members of the Commonwealth. It was representative of an approach that was wholly at odds with the Commonwealth of the late 1940s and early 1950s that had formed the 1st Commonwealth Division and had discussed the defence of the Middle East as a matter of their collective interest.

That said, a semblance of the old system remained extant and active even after 1981. Some, like the Five Powers Defence Arrangements, were pale imitations of earlier organisations tasked with similar goals, like its predecessor the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement.[3] Other efforts involved ensuring the security of a Commonwealth country, similar to the Emergency in Malaysia and Confrontation with Indonesia, now met with only limited support. The Falklands war, at the beginning of the 1980s, saw the contribution of two small Royal New Zealand Navy warships for the purposes of relieving British ships elsewhere. This contribution stood in stark contrast to the broadly based multinational efforts undertaken by the Commonwealth in earlier decades in Korea, the Middle East,

2 R. Nixon *Public Papers of the Presidents of the US 1969* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005) p 544-556

3 In reviewing the changed circumstances following the announcement of British withdrawal from the region and the implementation of the Five Power Defence Arrangements there was a consensus in Australian political and military circles that it 'is not stepping into British shoes and Australian forces will not fill the role played in the past by British forces'. It continued to say that 'the defence of Malaysia and Singapore will rest... with the two Governments concerned.' Although the deployment of Australian and British forces would continue, they would do so 'to enhance our [Australian] political and diplomatic influence in the region, promote stability and confidence in the area, assist the development of Malaysia's and Singapore's military forces and foster defence cooperation between them'. This was quite a change from the urging of previous Australian governments to seek approval from the US to pre-emptively occupy the Songhkla position in the event of conflict in the region in order to defend Malaya. - Review of Defence Cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore JS Report no. 56/59 A1838 Item 696/1/13 ANA

and South-East Asia. These events, and others during the period, highlighted the shift that had occurred in Commonwealth politics.

The alteration of strategic doctrine in the 1970s by the UK effectively scuppered the possibility of Commonwealth cooperation continuing in the manner it had previously. A suitable alternative to the UK as a pivotal force around which the rest of the Commonwealth coordinated was not found. Even if one had been found, the constituent members of the Commonwealth – including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK – had by this stage diverged so significantly in their strategic interests that a unified or cohesive approach to global issues was simply not possible. By the 1970s the conventional defence of the interests of each state had shrunk to the point where it was dominated by local concerns. The refocus of the UK to work with Europe also undermined the continued growth of any substantive and lingering cooperation that had continued with Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia. Although it had not ended it, any future cooperation in that respect appeared unlikely.[4]

Commonwealth defence cooperation was reinvigorated from an unlikely source – the New Commonwealth. The interest of these states in the internal affairs of other countries of the Commonwealth provided a new outlet for defence cooperation better suited to the new strategic and political climate. The rise of this new style of cooperation resulted in two different approaches to joint Commonwealth defence cooperation. One was this new style of cooperation, which was recognized and declared by the Commonwealth to be a Commonwealth endeavour and fitted the political atmosphere of the time but had no history as a form of Commonwealth defence cooperation. Indeed the manner in which that form of cooperation manifested would have been the subject of serious objections among the Commonwealth countries even twenty years earlier. The other, which despite a lack of fanfare and title as to its status, was a tried and tested method of Commonwealth defence cooperation. Furthermore, it was a style of cooperation that existed in part because of the long-standing cooperation amongst Commonwealth countries that persisted over several decades and had struggled on in spite of widespread political and strategic change.

[4] Although there was no longer a commitment to the defence of South-East Asia, and in fact the Australian government believed that 'a degree of uncertainty about our [Australia's] position affords an important diplomatic instrument and enlarges our opportunity for influence', there was nevertheless an ongoing Australian and British presence in the region that had the effect of continuing – in a small but important measure – a connection amongst the Commonwealth countries of the region. - Review of Defence Cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore JS Report no. 56/59 A1838 Item 696/1/13 ANA

Almost all countries of the Commonwealth up until 1947 had some level of military engagement with the rest of the Commonwealth. By 1970, however, the number of Commonwealth countries who cooperated with each other in matters of defence had more or less been at a standstill since 1947 despite explosive growth. Indeed, interest in multinational military activities using the Commonwealth as a vehicle had dropped considerably in the intervening years even amongst those who had once shown interest in such an enterprise. Canada and South Africa had ruled out further cooperation, although in very different circumstances and for different reasons. Australian and New Zealand support of Commonwealth related initiatives, while still present, was dwindling in the face of their own strategic reorientation. The new entrants to the Commonwealth were not interested in the traditional style of military engagement that the Commonwealth had conducted. Even if such an interest had been expressed, there had been ongoing concerns throughout the 1960s and 1970s concerning security leaks which complicated defence cooperation, these concerns extended even to countries such as Australia.[5] This was in addition to the normal difficulties that multinational military cooperation would ordinarily entail for the Commonwealth.[6]

Furthermore the fractious nature of the expanded Commonwealth was a point made time and time again in the aftermath of the decolonisation process. India, which had initially shown an interest in cooperative efforts in some form, fought a war against another Commonwealth country, Pakistan. This war led to the creation of Bangladesh, another country which joined the Commonwealth. For much the same reasons as India and Pakistan, Bangladesh was unable to consider the Commonwealth as a potential framework for military cooperation. The UK's withdrawal from East of the Suez, and then effectively back to Europe, removed the defence cooperation link between Commonwealth countries. Meanwhile, the US Guam doctrine put an end to the notion that the US might take on the UK's role. The strategic reorientation of the two major powers on which the continuation of the Commonwealth link was founded created a particularly bleak outlook for further cooperation of any sort in a recognisable form.

---

5 M. Goodman, 'With a Little Help from my Friends,' *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 18 (2003), p 155

6 South Africa, for instance, remained very sensitive to the potential leak of information from or to the US or the UK which might embarrass one or the other. The outcome of this was the implementation of a new level of security clearance, 'Guard' which was used to indicate when a document was 'not to be communicated to a national of the the US of America without the prior agreement of the originator'. - Weekly Intelligence Summary UDF General Staff Intelligence Committee Report no 33/57 CO/138/2 20 September 1957 MV 208 MV/EF 151 SANDFA

The Singapore Declaration

1971 was perhaps the most fateful year of the Commonwealth and cemented change that had been taking place since 1947. The Singapore Declaration of 1971 formally established the new direction of the Commonwealth in a way that had never been expressed before. It was not a new direction that was amenable to continued military cooperation. Although the focus on the internal politics of its constituent member states had been self-evident for some time, the Declaration highlighted the approach the Commonwealth as a whole took to censuring its members. It ended any lingering notion that may have existed that the Commonwealth was to be relied upon to support the territorial and political sovereignty of any Commonwealth country. Smaller organisational changes, but which were equally important to the overall atmosphere in the Commonwealth, were also implemented from 1971. The start of the 1970s marked a new era of Commonwealth political priorities and focus. It was an era in which the structures of the past were changed dramatically to reflect the new prevailing political circumstances.

There were also changes in the way the various political leaders across the Commonwealth interacted with each other. The practice of holding meetings outside the UK was unusual, but not completely without precedent. Canada had hosted a number of Commonwealth meetings since the first Colonial Conference in 1887. Nigeria held the first Commonwealth Prime Ministers meetings in 1966. Canada held the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 1973 and of the six meetings between 1971 and 1981 half were in 'Old Commonwealth' countries.[7] One of the remaining three meetings was held in Singapore in 1971, which had made its intentions on the Commonwealth defence relationship, as it was originally envisaged, quite clear. The Commonwealth was not particularly revolutionary in its choice of locale throughout the decade.

Significant effort was put into the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Canada in 1973 to ensure that the informal nature of the Commonwealth relationship was preserved in some form. Given the enlarged Commonwealth the idea that an informal discussion could be held amongst all of the assembled Prime Ministers (or, Heads of Government as they were now known) would seem an impossibility. Yet the practice of holding meaningful informal talks amongst the Commonwealth regarding matters of collective interest was revived as well as the circumstances allowed. Strict rules

[7] Canada held a meeting in 1973, the United Kingdom followed in 1977, and Australia then in 1981.

may have been enforced on the retreat, but there was a clear interest in ensuring that the fundamental character of Commonwealth meetings contained an element of the comparatively informal discussions that had been a hallmark of Commonwealth relationships in the past.[8] The retreat offered by Canada in 1973 was the nearby resort of Monte-Tremblant. This was a far cry from the country house at Chequers, but the intent remained intact. There was a clear awareness, on the political side at least, that the changes made to the Commonwealth had very far-reaching implications for all Commonwealth activity.[9]

Not only was the form of those meetings altered but the role and purpose of the Commonwealth was adapting to the new circumstances as well. The changing nature of the Commonwealth had been clear from 1949 with the addition of republics to the Commonwealth. Another early example of this new approach to Commonwealth politics was the condemnation of South Africa and its effective ejection from the organisation.[10] It was not until 1971 that the Commonwealth declared and formalised the principles which had informed the condemnation of South Africa a decade earlier. The Singapore Declaration heralded in a very public and concrete way the major change to the Commonwealth structure but this was merely a reflection of that change and not something new.

Chief amongst the changes undertaken across the Commonwealth was the increased interest in precision of nomenclature. Existing Commonwealth traditions and practices fell under the axe as things were made that more accurately reflected the new circumstances. Prime Ministers' Conferences were relabelled as Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings. The last remaining 'Commonwealth' military formation, the 28th Commonwealth Brigade, was re-designated as the 28th ANZUK Brigade. The role, purpose, and intent of both remained exactly the same despite these changes.

The Singapore Declaration of 1971 was, in content at least, generally conservative. It

---

8 The Head of Government, his wife, and a single aide (who would not always be in attendance) was the strict limit imposed to help control the size of the informal meetings, and even then the number of people involved in such informal retreats could grow into the hundreds.

9 Although the issues discussed were no less worrisome – such as the Irish withdrawal from the Commonwealth, a first in its history, in October 1948. - L. Pearson *The Commonwealth 1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971) p 14

10 It has been further commented by other authors that the Commonwealth, while in its new version lacking a 'mutual commitment' has found its calling in other affairs – notable a North-South international dialogue which strikes at the very heart of this change which promoted racism, rather than other issues, to the top of its agenda at this time. - J.D. Miller, 'The Commonwealth and World Order: The Zimmern vision and after' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979) p 172

recognised that the Commonwealth was a 'voluntary association of independent states' which had been established by declaration and practice since 1926.[11] The ten, core principles of the Commonwealth focused on humanitarian issues and the vast majority of them had already been the subject of the Commonwealth's attention since 1949. One in particular, race relations, had already seen active and arguably quite strong action with the effective dismissal of South Africa from the Commonwealth. Where the Singapore Declaration was more extraordinary was in how it declared that it was 'rejecting coercion as an instrument of policy'.[12] This actively undermined an element of the Commonwealth which had otherwise been left largely undisturbed by its expansion. The active defence of the territorial integrity of Commonwealth countries had been a cornerstone of Commonwealth defence cooperation. It was the fundamental principle which saw Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa join the UK in a variety of conflicts, and which had seen the UK expend significant sums to ensure the defence of new states like Malaysia and Belize. Its outright rejection undermined these efforts in a fundamental way that had not previously been expressed.

The rejection of coercion by most of the new Commonwealth countries to the Commonwealth is well-documented. Almost every member of the Commonwealth was also a member of the Non-Aligned Movement. India itself had been central to the launch of that Movement.[13] Only a couple of the Commonwealth countries that joined after 1947 actively contributed to anything that might be considered the defence of the Commonwealth. This particular comment in the Declaration was very much in keeping with the times and reflective of its circumstances, but it was extraordinary in that it was now the declared policy of the Commonwealth as a whole. Commonwealth defence cooperation had existed even without the full participation of every country in the Commonwealth in previous years. Its abolition, which was in effect what this advocated, put an end to the use of the Commonwealth as the overarching political framework for such cooperation. Hence in 1971 the abrupt, and largely meaningless, name change of the 28th Commonwealth Brigade to the 28th ANZUK Brigade. Although the birth of the modern Commonwealth must surely be traced back to the independence of India and Pakistan in 1949 the Singapore Declaration would seem to mark a fitting end of the formation of the modern Commonwealth. It detailed processes and values which had been reflected in

[11] A transcript of the declaration can be found here: 'Inter-imperial relations committee: report, proceedings and memoranda November 1926 E(IR/26) series

[12] Singapore declaration of Commonwealth Principles 1971 issued at the Heads of Government Meeting in Singapore 22 January 1971

[13] D. Rothermund, 'The Era of Non-Alignment' in N. Miskovic, H Fischer-Tine, N. Boskovska (eds) *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi – Bandung – Belgrade* (New York: Routledge, 2014) p 19

its actions previously but never explicitly expressed. In that sense the Declaration also signalled the end of extant forms of Commonwealth cooperation which were not amenable to the new political atmosphere. The continuation of Commonwealth structures under other names, notwithstanding the rejection of coercion as a matter of policy, was fundamentally at odds with the Commonwealth that had quite clearly existed in the first half of the twentieth century.

Throughout the 1970s the Commonwealth issued further declarations and statements. Although the Singapore Declaration was one of the most influential and became one of the key documents of the Commonwealth, the Lusaka Declaration in 1979 further commented on racism and racial discrimination.[14] This was an issue which had been at the centre of Commonwealth disagreements for the past thirty years. Although the Lusaka Declaration focused on racism, as well as continuing Commonwealth criticism of South Africa's policy of apartheid, it advocated 'legal equality without any distinction or exclusion based on race, colour, sex, descent, or national or ethnic origin'.[15] It was indicative of the balance of power inside the Commonwealth that neither the Singapore nor Lusaka Declarations made any reference to discrimination or conflict arising as a result of religion and contented itself with noting the broad spectrum of faiths practised within the Commonwealth. Despite the obvious ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan (which resulted in Pakistan's withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1972) over religion and similar tensions elsewhere in the Commonwealth there was little effort made to address these issues. This reflected a balance of power that was decidedly in favour of not only the newer Commonwealth countries, but also in favour of India and the Non-Aligned Movement. This was hardly surprising given that the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth overlapped quite significantly. The practical implications of this cross-membership were profound and help explain the Commonwealth's approach to international issues.

Perhaps the most concrete outcome of the Singapore Declaration was that it finally addressed the lingering questions and doubts that remained regarding the exact nature of the Commonwealth

[14] An equally important, if somewhat anachronistic, debate at the time of the conference that led to the Lusaka declaration was the unseemly arguments between the United Kingdom and Zambia concerning the role and purpose of the queen in the Commonwealth political structure. - R. Craggs and H. Kumarasingham, 'Losing an Empire and Building a Role: The Queen, Geopolitics and the Construction of the Commonwealth Headship at the Lusaka Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 1979' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43 (2015) p 81

[15] Lusaka declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice 1979 issued at the Heads of Government Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, 7 August 1979

relationship, both internationally and amongst the Commonwealth itself. It is important to note that the Commonwealth of 1971 had become an organisation which offered and demanded mutual respect for all countries under its banner, rather than a Commonwealth which offered and assumed mutual support. The Commonwealth before 1971 was an organisation which actively, if not altogether successfully, involved itself in world politics and encouraged the defence of its constituent Commonwealth countries. It was far from successful in that regard, and it was certainly not always of one mind on defence issues. The Chanak crisis raised the issue of divergent political views amongst the Commonwealth countries as early as 1922, and those divergent views were expressed even more clearly with the announcement of Ireland's neutrality in 1939. There was also a rather mixed response to the Suez crisis. The level of involvement of the states in these affairs had taken on a much more regional basis since 1949. However, at no point did any member of the Commonwealth object to 'Commonwealth' military actions. Neither had the Commonwealth advocated the chastisement of Commonwealth countries which dissented from the collective, nor had it demanded or obliged involvement in any Commonwealth activities. Pakistan and South Africa's non-involvement in the Korean conflict was not met with a chorus of disapproval. Canada's decision to decline involvement in the defence of the Middle East did not draw rebuke. It may not always have been favourably received but the Commonwealth had demonstrated a willingness to be quite flexible in its approach and expectations of individual countries. The Commonwealth after 1971 was a very different organisation. Here its flexibility was not afforded to external defence issues, but rather internal policies. It exercised an inordinate amount of flexibility in avoiding passing comment on the ongoing Indian-Pakistan conflict. It declined comment on the missteps of a whole swathe of new countries to the Commonwealth. However, it offered no flexibility with regards to the use of the Commonwealth title which was increasingly seen as only applicable where there was consensus amongst the Commonwealth. This was distinct from the previous use of the term where it was considered applicable even where a number of Commonwealth countries remained uninvolved.

In terms of Commonwealth military cooperation the consequences could not have been more clear. The change in the role and attitude of the Commonwealth disturbed the foundations of the military relationship shared amongst Commonwealth countries. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s opportunities for Commonwealth defence cooperation presented themselves. Unlike the previous three decades these opportunities passed without being addressed or even remarked upon to any

significant degree. Two major coups occurred during CHOGM's, one in Uganda in 1971 and another in the Seychelles in 1977.[16] Neither of these coups prompted a Commonwealth response. The Ugandan coup was significant on account of the forced relocation of the Indian minority and the seizure of their businesses and goods. These were all elements of serious and widespread atrocities carried out in the country under the rule of General Amin. Although the Seychelles coup was not quite so dramatic, long-standing issues from the decolonisation process continued to cause political upheaval across the Commonwealth. Failed governments and repeated coups were common in both Ghana and Nigeria throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[17] Little attention was given across the Commonwealth to these issues, and the possibility of joint Commonwealth military intervention for the stability of a fellow Commonwealth country was never raised even before the 1971 Singapore Declaration.

The capability of the British government to supply the lion's share of the military force necessary for the defence of other Commonwealth members had been steadily eroded since 1949. Arguably after the conclusion of the Confrontation with Indonesia that capability had well and truly disappeared. There was no comparable effort by the Commonwealth, individually or collectively, to step into that role. The notion of an increased level of Commonwealth military cooperation after 1963 never became a serious consideration. In fact the political will which had dominated the Commonwealth during this time was actively against such measures. The atmosphere of non-involvement militarily was as much a reflection of a growing British inability to provide the basis of such activity as it was of the new political atmosphere in the Commonwealth. This was a change that had been happening for decades in small measures, and by the end of the 1970s almost entirely encompassed the Commonwealth to the point where the immediate territorial defence of Commonwealth countries was met with a lukewarm response from some quarters and what bordered on active hostility from others. This diverse range of opinions was clearly demonstrated in the Commonwealth's reaction to the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands in 1982.

The rejection of coercion and the primacy of mutual respect for the constituent countries of the Commonwealth along acceptable lines stood in stark contrast to the pre-1971 Commonwealth which had engaged in defence cooperation, and was totally alien to the wartime cooperation of the pre-1949

[16] For Uganda see P.G. Okoth, 'The Political Economy of Human Rights Crisis in Uganda 1962-1985' *Transafrican Journal of History* 24 (1994) p 151, and for the Seychelles see J. Hatchard, 'Re-establishing a Multi-party State: Some Constitutional Lessons from the Seychelles' *Journal of Modern African Studies* 31 (1993) p 601

[17] See C. Onwumechili, *African Democratization and Military Coups* (London: Praeger, 1998) pp 47-50

Commonwealth.[18] Military cooperation in the pre-1949 Commonwealth was a very distinct and important aspect of joint Commonwealth activities. The Commonwealth as a whole had fought two wars over the preceding fifty years that had spanned the globe using troops and equipment from a multitude of geographical locations and owing allegiance to a number of centres of political influence. The Commonwealth from 1949 to 1971 had, as outlined in previous chapters, clearly followed the approach and with much the same mindset but with varying results and a decreased interest in the military cooperation. The rejection of coercion in 1971 marked a distinct end to that particular style of military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth, at least officially.

The New Commonwealth rises

Although not the direct subject of this study, it is worth looking briefly at some of the new Commonwealth members, specifically India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan were the oldest of the new members of the Commonwealth and their relationship both with each other and with the Commonwealth was indicative of the difficulty caused by the decolonisation process. The long-term consequences of these difficulties lasted years after decolonisation and occasionally resulted in a situation which was rife with conflict. In 1971 the ongoing dispute over the Kashmir region was further complicated by divisions between East and West Pakistan which eventually led to civil war.[19] The Bengali ethnic group in East Pakistan had suffered considerably under the Pakistan regime, particularly in the years leading up to the civil war. Several months after the initial conflict with the Bengalis pressure on West Pakistan mounted as a result of India encouraging international support for the Bengali movement. This prompted a Pakistani attack on India early in December 1971. Although the Indo-Pakistan war was finished relatively quickly, it is one of the most poignant examples of the difficulties the Commonwealth had in fostering military cooperation amongst the new countries of the Commonwealth.[20] India and Pakistan fought a number of wars since independence but this particular

---

[18] Such distance would grow ever larger, with the Royal Commonwealth Society speaking in 1999, some 50 years after the accession of India and Pakistan to the Commonwealth , that the Commonwealth possessed 5 'common goals': prosperity, sustainable development, opportunity, security, and human rights. The transformation process that had gripped hold of Commonwealth affairs had turned the Commonwealth into the strangest of international organisations with goals and objectives in a notional, rather than concrete, context. - S.R. Ashton, 'British Government Perspectives on the Commonwealth 1964-71: An Asset or a Liability?' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35 (2007) p 90

[19] For a detailed account of the conflict, and particularly its causes and the influence of key figures in the lead-up to the war see R. Sisson & L. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

[20] It is also worth mentioning that conflict has erupted between India and Pakistan on three separate occasions since 1947. - A. Jalal, 'India's Partition and the Defence of Pakistan: An Historical Perspective' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 15 (1987) p 289

outbreak led to a further deterioration of relations and spoke volumes about the overall nature of the Commonwealth relationship. Pakistan's departure from the Commonwealth in 1972 over the issue of Bangladesh further highlighted the fractious nature of the organisation.[21] Cooperation in anything but a symbolic or limited effort had been problematic for the Commonwealth since 1947. The Indian-Pakistan relationship had been at the core of that problem initially and it had not subsided over the years. The decolonisation process had proved itself troublesome for a number of new states. Cooperation inside an international organisation dominated by those countries was an exercise in futility at best, and a cause of conflict at worst.

The role which India and Pakistan played in poisoning the atmosphere of the Commonwealth should not be underestimated. None of the territories that became independent from the British Empire during this period drew upon a predominantly British history and culture. The vast majority underwent some form of ethnic or cultural violence at some point between their independence and 1981. The ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan highlighted the issues in decolonisation in a way that even the sectarian troubles in Northern Ireland did not. Any military cooperation amongst the Commonwealth would necessarily encounter the same issues which had forced Irish neutrality, and prompted conflict between India and Pakistan. In effect, the political change that the Commonwealth underwent in its expansion eroded the previously hospitable atmosphere that had allowed for cooperative defence efforts. Even when such cooperation had not involved all of the Commonwealth there was no underlying issue that actively prevented any such endeavour. This was no longer the case for the post-1971 Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth had struggled with the influx of new member states, and the issues and problems that each carried. Disagreements and divergence in priorities on external matters also redirected the Commonwealth to focus internally. The departure of Pakistan, in much the same way as the departure of South Africa before it, was indicative of that shift in perspective. The long-standing issues behind the departure of Pakistan and South Africa also pointed to the unsettled nature of relations inside the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth became a force for imposing particular domestic policies on other Commonwealth countries. This was an approach that was entirely at odds with the progression of Commonwealth relations from the 1931 Statute of Westminster. The effect that

[21] J. Hollowell, *Britain since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008) p 107

this had on potential military cooperation was significant. Commonwealth military cooperation during the First World War was assumed, and during the Second World War assured. Cooperation amongst the older Commonwealth countries fared slightly better in this new era of nationally-focused defence priorities. This extended to such older initiatives as the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement which had seen new life following the ratification of the Five Power Defence Arrangement.

The Falklands War unveiled just how little military support could be counted on from the Commonwealth. The only exception to effective non-involvement militarily was the deployment of the Royal New Zealand navy to the Persian Gulf to relieve British warships for service in the South Atlantic. The limited involvement of the Commonwealth, coupled with the weakness of the British position in the conflict, served as a stark reminder of the deterioration of the UK's ability to conduct large-scale operations. It also underscored the difficulties in ensuring a coordinated Commonwealth effort to defend the territorial integrity of a fellow Commonwealth country. The inability of the Commonwealth to support the territorial integrity of other Commonwealth country resurfaced again in the Belize-Guatemalan tensions in the lead-up to Belize's independence in 1981.[22] These three elements – 1) a new approach to the Commonwealth organisation, 2) the weakening of the Commonwealth and the UK's ability to act either independently or in conjunction with one another, and 3) the apathy towards the fate of another Commonwealth countries involved in armed conflict – formed the relatively hostile political atmosphere of the 1970s that resulted in the end of Commonwealth defence cooperation and quietly ushered in a new era for the Commonwealth.

The reaction of the Old Commonwealth

Of the five countries initially involved in defence cooperation amongst the Commonwealth – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK – much changed, not least of which was that one of their number was no longer even in the Commonwealth. South Africa did not return to the Commonwealth until elections were held under majority rule in 1994.[23] Little changed in South Africa with respect to Commonwealth military cooperation in the years it spent outside of the Commonwealth.

---

[22] J. R. Maguire, 'The Decolonisation of Belize: Self-Determination v. Territorial Integrity' *Virginia Journal of International Law* 22 (1981) p 849

[23] The reasons for South Africa's return were not solely limited to majority rule. In addition to the Commonwealth's preference for its internal organisation there was also a number of benefits that the newly revamped organisation could bring to South Africa namely Commonwealth aid, a friendly international forum for networking and other talks, and as a reassurance to Afrikaners that South Africa. R. Hyam & P. Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok:Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p 349

It had, however, advanced its nuclear technology. The technology it developed, initially for peaceful purposes such as the relatively rapid creation of artificial harbours, mine clearing, and other major civil engineering projects, was eventually militarised. Their work in this area was further refined and by 1982 South Africa had successfully created a number of nuclear weapons. Interestingly these devices were planned to be delivered by Buccaneer and Canberra aircraft, aircraft which had also been slated for the deployment of nuclear weapons by the UK in certain tactical roles and supplied to South Africa in the early 1960s. The remnants of Commonwealth defence cooperation lingered on in South Africa long after it had ended its relationship with the Commonwealth.

While cooperation had remained an ongoing feature of Canadian defence policy, Canadian military strategy had shifted over the course of the years. Successive UN peace-keeping operations had drawn on Canadian military forces with increased regularity. A history of major peace-keeping missions such as deployment to the Suez in 1957 and Cyprus in 1964, were built upon throughout the 1970s. A second force deployed to the Suez involved yet more Canadian forces in 1973, while a ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Yom Kippur War led to another deployment in 1974. An Interim force was deployed to the Lebanon a few years later in 1978. Successive Canadian governments and senior military personnel were clearly willing to increase their contribution to peace-keeping efforts. Outside of some non-military cooperation on technical matters, the most notable of which was Canadian-Indian nuclear cooperation, there was little Canadian engagement with the Commonwealth in defence. Canadian efforts had primarily focused on their own defence and cooperation with the US. Canada's focus was firmly set on helping meet the needs of the UN and NATO specifically in the realm of helping secure its own territory and the US's northern front against the USSR.

South Africa and Canada continued to limit the level of engagement of their armed services with instances of military cooperation amongst Commonwealth, albeit for very different reasons but with much the same effect. However, successive governments in both of the Antipodean Dominions pursued the Commonwealth relationship with varying degrees of vigour and success after 1971. Although both had been affected by their involvement in Vietnam, the 1970s and the opening years of the 1980s marked a distinctly Commonwealth-influenced approach to military cooperation. The withdrawal of the UK from East of the Suez, and the US Guam doctrine, necessitated a reorientation to

a more local defence posture. The Forward Defence approach favoured by successive Australian governments from the mid-1950s into the early 1970s was discarded to pursue a policy which focused on the defence of the Australian continent.[24] New Zealand's defence policy, usually in step with their Australian neighbours, floundered following this change. New Zealand developed an interest in peace-keeping, but also continued to participate in some cooperative efforts far beyond its borders. That can be seen in the deployment of the Royal New Zealand Navy to relieve a Royal Navy vessel in the Persian Gulf for transfer to the South Atlantic for the Falklands War. Both countries also continued their regional, Commonwealth-based, multinational defence cooperative efforts. The Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement, which served as a framework of Commonwealth cooperation in the region, was superseded by the Five Power Defence Arrangements which continued to link Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the UK to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore.[25] Australian interest in the region, despite the shift to a more localised defence, continued if in a somewhat more haphazard fashion. The Royal Australian Air Force had squadrons deployed to RAAF (previously RAF) Butterworth in Malaysia until 1988. Both the Australian and New Zealand armed forces maintained a permanent presence on the base for the purposes of keeping cooperative efforts with Singapore and Malaysia alive long after 1980.[26]

This level of cooperation amongst Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the UK was also met with a more proactive foreign policy in the region after 1980. The Australian government was approached by a number of countries in the Pacific in 1982, many of them Commonwealth countries, to supply them with small patrol boats for the purposes of protecting the Exclusive Economic Zone which had been assigned to all nations earlier that year by the UN. The centrality of Australia to

[24] D. Denoon, *A Trial Separation: Australia and the Decolonisation of Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2012) p 15

[25] Unlike the AMDA, however, the Five Power Defence Arrangements were a much looser treaty, even when considering the area in which it applied. The FPDA referred only to the Malayan peninsula itself. The deployment of forces to maintain a presence in Singapore/Malaysia carried with it no commitment to deploy our [Australian] forces to East Malaysia.' - Review of Defence Cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore JS Report no. 56/59 A1838 Item 696/1/13 ANA

[26] Starting from 1971 the joint Australian-New Zealand contribution to the FPDA forces in Malaysia amounted to a single destroyer or frigate based out of Singapore (with 'an annual visit of an RAN Task Group'). One battalion with few supporting elements based in Singapore, with a forward company at RAAF Butterworth and a contribution to the staff of the Jungle Warfare Centre at Kota Tdigi. These would be supported by two squadrons of Mirage aircraft based out of RAAF Butterworth, and these squadrons – coupled with the Air Defence system at the airbase – would 'constitute a major aspect of our [Australian] military presence'. The New Zealand contribution was to consist of a single frigate based in Singapore, a battalion along Australian lines also in Singapore, and limited supporting air elements also in Singapore. - Review of Defence Cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore JS Report no. 56/59 A1838 Item 696/1/13 ANA

the defence of the region seemed to be yielding some positive action.[27] This was approximately twenty years too late to lend weight to Commonwealth defence cooperation of the traditional kind, such as had been seen with the 28th ANZUK Brigade and its predecessors, but was nevertheless indicative of the persistence of a Commonwealth military connection.

The difficulty with the Commonwealth defence relationship had always been its reliance on a single member, the UK. Cooperative efforts between Commonwealth countries in military affairs for an extended period which did not involve the UK were almost non-existent before 1971 and only marginally present in the 1980s. The UK's announcement of a withdrawal from East of the Suez by 1971 in 1967 caused significant concern in Australia and New Zealand. Undoubtedly Commonwealth cooperative efforts had the strongest outcome in South-East Asia. A British withdrawal from the region seriously threatened gains made in that regard. Despite the withdrawal some elements were kept alive. The air base at Butterworth remained the Headquarters of the Commonwealth effort in the region, while British training grounds were maintained in Brunei.[28] British military efforts were, however, scaled back by the withdrawal date. The British focused more on involvement in Europe and NATO, particularly in providing an anti-submarine warfare capacity in the North Atlantic, as well as handling internal difficulties, specifically the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Much of this shift can be attributed to the economic difficulties faced by the UK throughout the post-war period. The steady reduction in military capability since the decolonisation process began had at its core the need to develop a fiscally sustainable military force that met requirements. In the context of regional defence initiatives, this resulted in the UK disavowing its role as the core element of Commonwealth defence cooperation in favour of participating in a contributory capacity.[29] The focus on Europe, where the British military in its reduced capability still offered a significant element in a broader context of multinational cooperation, proved appealing. The US declined to take on the UK's relinquished role with its announcement of the Guam doctrine in 1969. This left Australia and New Zealand, which had previously relied on the UK, the US, or both, for their protection isolated in a way that they had not experienced since the disaster at Singapore in 1942. It is understandable that in the context of British

[27] More limited efforts during the 1950s were typically based around securing British or American interest, which was not always successful. - R. Thompson, 'Conflict of Cooperation? Britain and Australia in the South Pacific 1950-1960' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23 (1995) p 312

[28] A. J. Stockwell, 'Britain and Brunei 1945-1963: Imperial Retreat and Royal Ascendancy' *Modern Asian Studies* 38 (2004) p 787

[29] The possibility of the UK looking to contribute to the overall defensive effort, rather than maintaining a fully independent and coherent defensive capability, had been flagged as early as 1957 – Brief for the Prime Minister Balanced Collective Forces 12 November 1957 CAB 131/18 D(57)26 UKNA

withdrawal and US non-involvement in broader initiatives, Australian policy turned to its immediate defence.

The Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force

The Commonwealth did become much more active in military affairs after 1971. It developed a role for itself in peace-keeping operations under the aegis of its broader interest in the internal affairs of other Commonwealth countries. The Commonwealth, before 1960, had traditionally refrained from commenting on the affairs of another Commonwealth country. This undoubtedly reflected Dominion resistance against anything that might have felt like a resurgence of centralised interference in their affairs from the UK. The Commonwealth of the 1980s had no such experience and operated on a very different basis. Having already actively criticised South Africa to the point of obliging its withdrawal, it further sought to pass comment on Rhodesia.[30] It even went to the point of establishing a multinational Commonwealth force to ensure that the internal affairs of another Commonwealth country were managed along particular lines. This new approach, at odds with the Commonwealth of the first half of the twentieth century, was very much in alignment with international discourse at the UN. The deployment of an electoral monitoring force to Rhodesia was a product of its time. However, the Commonwealth was far from united on such subjects, and tensions inside the Commonwealth rose not only on account of this renewed desire to 'fix' other countries, but also from ongoing border friction. India and Pakistan remained constantly at odds with each other over the ongoing territorial dispute between them. This dispute would take on a whole new character following the development of nuclear weapons in both countries during the 1970s. The departure of Pakistan from the Commonwealth in 1972 was prompted by the inclusion of Bangladesh into the Commonwealth. This highlighted the disturbed state of affairs that had continued in the region since the British departure in 1947, and more importantly, that such issues were bleeding over into the Commonwealth realm more generally.

The Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force suggested the emergence of a new trend in the development of Commonwealth military cooperation. It was a style of cooperation in keeping with the times that suited the relatively limited capabilities of individual Commonwealth member states and better reflected the current state of affairs within the Commonwealth. The notion of multilateral

[30] Most interesting to note here is that the Canadian government was typically the first to censure Rhodesia. Whether it was over Rhodesian constitutional development, encouraging Commonwealth discussion on the country, criticizing their UDI or blaming the British government for the mess Rhodesia was causing. - C. Watts, 'Britain, the Old Commonwealth, and the Problem of Rhodesian Independence 1964-65' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 3*6 (2008) p 90

defence arrangements had long since lost favour, and continued only loosely in the form of the FPDA. The lukewarm reception that the UK received when faced with external aggression further highlighted just how unconcerned the Commonwealth had become with ensuring the territorial integrity of its own. When it came to censuring members for their internal policies the Commonwealth as a whole was more assertive. The monitoring force, which was formed to support the Commonwealth Observer Group in Rhodesia was formed of troops from Australia, Fiji, Kenya, New Zealand, and the UK.[31] It was formed with the full political backing of the Commonwealth as an organisation.[32] The political will of the Commonwealth to censure member states had been demonstrated before with South Africa. However, the monitoring force represented the first deployment of troops to ensure that internal reform was carried out in a manner consistent with Commonwealth principles. It remains one of the peculiarities of the historical development of the Commonwealth that it was more self assured when dealing with what it saw to be egregious activities internal to the Commonwealth than it was in securing its territory from outside aggression.

One compelling driving force in the growth of peace-keeping operations worldwide was the UN. At a time when the USSR and the US dominated international relations the UN offered an alternative outlet, for less militarily capable powers, to engage militarily in the advancement of their interests in the way states have done since their inception. This new form of influence came with peace-keeping operations. This had been recognised by Canada much earlier, in the late 1940s. The twin pressures from the UN both in how it conducted its business politically, and in the organisation of the military operations which it advocated, did not have traditional territorial defence in mind. This created an atmosphere of international relations in which it became the norm to involve foreign countries in the internal affairs of others. This new political atmosphere was well received, especially in the Commonwealth. The reduced level of military capability and the surge in cultural and moral interests can be traced back to the variety of political and social difficulties that were involved in the decolonisation process. Such difficulties had been well demonstrated in India, Pakistan, Ireland, and throughout the British Empire. Ultimately such interests coalesced amongst those Commonwealth countries who were subjected to those difficulties. It was hardly surprising then that the members of the

[31] A. Rouvez, M. Coco, & J-P Paddack, *Disconsolate Empires: French, British and Belgian Military Involvement in Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994) p 269

[32] This was, in fact, a backing sought by the United Kingdom in its resolution to the issue. Duncan Sandys, at the time of these comments Minister of Defence, believed that the Rhodesia situation was not just a challenge to Britain but 'the rest of the Commonwealth' as well. - J. Wood, *So Far and No Further* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2012) p 185-186

Commonwealth readily switched their focus to the internal policies of other nations and became more concerned with such endeavours. This global shift in contemporary military and political thought fundamentally altered the concepts which underpinned the Commonwealth defence cooperation. It drove its progression in a manner which was at odds with the older style of Commonwealth defence cooperation.

Conclusion

One of the few regions that maintained a significant level of Commonwealth cooperation after 1947 was South-East Asia. This continued well after the British withdrawal from East of the Suez in 1971 albeit in a much reduced capacity. Anglo-Australian-New Zealand-Malayan-Singaporean cooperation had started as far back as 1957 with the creation of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement. Despite its name the actions undertaken directly as a result of this agreement also included Australia and New Zealand, with Singapore included as part of the Federation of Malaya.[33] In 1963 the AMDA was altered slightly to the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement, recognising the political changes arising from the failure of the Federation of Malaya. This was the political instrument that provided for joint Commonwealth operations in the region amongst these Commonwealth countries. With the announcement of the British withdrawal from the region and in accordance with the expiry of the AMDA a successor treaty with less legally binding terms, the Five Power Defence Arrangements, was signed by all parties in 1971.

A key practical outcome of the FPDA was the growth in operations of and deployment to the Butterworth airbase in Malaya. The Butterworth airbase was notable for its transfer through three of the five signatories. Originally a RAF base, it was transferred to the RAAF in 1957 following the independence of Malaya.[34] The RAAF maintained it until 1988. It then came under the control of the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF). The reduced capability and interest of the UK reflected an acceptance of increased Australian involvement. This can be clearly seen in the force levels

[33] Much of the slowness to ensure Singapore was an element of the Federation came from Malaya rather than Singapore. Although the trend of promoting federations was still ascendant the actual drive for such formations in the affected areas, including here between Singapore and the rest of Malaya, was less enthusiastic. - M. Jones, 'Creating Malaysia: Singapore Security, the Borneo Territories, and the Contours of British Policy 1961-63' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 28 (2000) p 100

[34] RAAF Butterworth was of particular importance to the Australians. It being 'their only forward air base' and during their tenure they invested heavily in its operational capacity and efficiency. Its use also avoided issues which would arise through the use of the airbases at Singapore which caused some amount of difficulty in the 1960s between the Australians and Malaysians. - Report by E. N. Larmour 1 June 1962 DO 169 POL 58/2 52/118/2 UKNA

permanently deployed to the region as part of the FPDA from 1971. Although the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force maintained a small number of officers with a British aircraft squadron on rotation through RAAF Butterworth on a regular basis.[35] Its overall contribution was significantly less than either the Malaysian or Australian deployments. It is also worth noting that it was Australia which, since transfer of Butterworth from the RAF in 1957, supplied the majority of the air squadrons and supporting formations assigned to the base including the base commander.

The FPDA provided the basis for cooperation in South-East Asia throughout the decade, which included joint military exercises for both air and naval assets from all five countries. The first of these was organized in 1981. The continuation of pre-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation in this region was not a success replicated elsewhere. It is interesting to note that the two new Commonwealth countries – Malaysia and Singapore – were not free of the ethnic and cultural difficulties that plagued other new Commonwealth countries. Malaysia and Singapore experienced difficulties from within, between, and indeed from outside relating to ethnic and cultural differences. Despite this Malaysia and Singapore involved themselves in existing Commonwealth defence cooperation within the region.[36] They were unique in doing so. There clearly existed an atmosphere amongst them that was more conducive to cooperation for Commonwealth countries in South-East Asia which did not exist elsewhere. Furthermore, the UK continued to hold an interest in the region and it had been closely tied to both Malaysia and Singapore following both the Emergency and Confrontation. This fits into a broader political framework of regional defence that had been fostered since 1957. In addition, it was a framework which more successfully weathered the retraction from a global role of Commonwealth endeavours to regional defence initiatives in the 1960s. Although undoubtedly shaken by the further collapse of defence interests to a much more national-orientation in the 1970s it had a much firmer basis of continuation than efforts elsewhere.

While the Commonwealth enjoyed success in South-East Asia it had a more mixed evolution elsewhere. Although by 1981 the draws on UK forces were a fraction of what they were in comparison to the previous thirty years the UK was still responding to a number of crises around the globe. The Falklands War of 1982 demonstrated how far-flung remnants of the British empire required a capability

[35] This practice has continued since its transfer to the RMAF in 1988.
[36] N. Ganesan, 'Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Some Recent Developments' *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 25 (1998) p 22

in excess of what was readily available from the UK's own armed forces, or which could be relied upon from their allies. By 1982 those allies could not really be said to include the Commonwealth as a whole, but rather a number of independent states some of which were in the Commonwealth. The Falklands War exposed the extent of the steep decline in British capabilities that had been ongoing since the end of the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation in 1963. It was believed that without significant allied support the UK did not possess the military capability to assemble and dispatch a military force capable of reclaiming the islands from the Argentinians on their own.[37] It was noted that the lack of a major aircraft carrier, in conjunction with no nearby friendly airfields, severely limited potential British operations in the region. This recalled an earlier debate between the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy regarding the choice between carrier procurement and overseas air bases regarding the cuts made by the Treasury, and presented a situation where neither were available. Even when the Ministry of Defence was tasked with considering the possibility of recapturing the islands their response was 'discouraging'.[38] Problematically, the support that was considered necessary to mount such an operation was unlikely to be forthcoming.

Given the changed nature of Commonwealth cooperation by 1981 the Commonwealth could no longer be relied upon to fill in gaps in operational capability as it had previously. The level of support necessary to fill gaps in operational capability had been demonstrated in South-East Asia on a number of occasions over the previous decades. Indeed, it is notable that of all the Commonwealth countries only New Zealand, offered its armed forces to aid in the removal of a foreign power from British territory. Even New Zealand's contribution, a single small ship, was offered only in an indirect way to relieve Royal Navy vessels elsewhere and allow the Royal Navy to form a fleet of significant enough strength that it might retake the islands. Such a token contribution was a far cry from the cooperation amongst the Commonwealth that had led to the creation of a multinational Division with similar training and doctrine and a combined approach to global strategy on defence issues.[39] Instead the British government had to be content with political support from the Commonwealth, and some trade restrictions imposed by a number of Commonwealth countries on Argentina. This was certainly a far

[37] D. Gibran, *The Falklands War: Britain Versus the Past in the South Atlantic* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998) p 141

[38] L. Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign Volume 2: War and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2005) p 57

[39] Joint training exercises had been a hallmark of cooperative efforts through the Commonwealth Brigade group between Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, even if there were occasional disputes as to the cost of such operations. - Annex to COS 399/27/3/61 'Note on Meeting of Australian Chiefs of Staff with General Hull' 9 March 1961 DO 169 UKNA

cry from the heady days of the 1st Commonwealth Division, or the active deployment of troops in Malaya.

The Commonwealth's reaction to the war was lukewarm at best. In some countries it bordered on the actively hostile. The announcement that New Zealand would supply a warship for the relief of British warships in the Persian Gulf must certainly have caused some embarrassment to the Australian government.[40] The comparable Australian role in the affair was not to cause a fuss over the sale of *HMS Invincible* falling through. South Africa, although long since lost to the Commonwealth more generally, had its relationship with the UK sorely tested on account of strong economic and military ties between Argentina and South Africa. Rumours that South Africa had been actively supplying Argentina with weapons was rampant in intelligence circles although these were never fully corroborated.[41] Canada's reaction, while initially positive, was paralysed between a desire to adhere to the UN and to provide support to the UK. The UN had failed to impose its will on either party. Furthermore, this was not a conflict which could be resolved through peace-keeping endeavours which both the UN and Canada had advocated. Interestingly many of the new nations of the Commonwealth were rather more sympathetic, and certainly in the early stages of the conflict were quite public in their support of the UK against Argentina's aggression. That support wavered, however, as the conflict continued. In particular the sinking of the Argentinian battleship *Belgrano* proved unpopular across the Commonwealth. India's sudden announcement that while it still supported the UK it also recognised that the Argentinian claim to the islands had some merit was indicative of the sort of ambivalent support the Commonwealth provided throughout the whole affair.[42] Outside of New Zealand, there was little direct military support for the UK from the Commonwealth. If nothing else the Falklands War was demonstrative of the end to the military aspect of the Commonwealth that had dominated its strategic considerations since the start of the century.

Another clear end to the military aspect of the Commonwealth came in the form of the change in title for the 28th Commonwealth Brigade. This too was indicative of the recognition that what had previously been accepted as Commonwealth before was no longer thought of in that way. Although the

40 New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review Volume 32 p 44

41 'Reply to British request for South African arms embargo against Argentina' BTS1/20/3 Department of Foreign Affairs – Note that this reply is not dated.

42 S. Badsey, M. Grove, & R. Havers, *The Falklands Conflict Twenty Years On* (Oxford: Frank Cass, 2005) p 184 for analysis, and see *The Times* 13 May 1982 for a contemporary report of the speech given by the Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

demise of the subsequently renamed ANZUK brigade occurred a few years later in 1974 the intervening period illustrated how Commonwealth military relations continued in spite of its supposed end. This continued cooperation amongst Commonwealth countries which, in years prior, had been described as Commonwealth cooperation was now described in other terms. There was no difference in the substance of what was happening whether it was called 'Commonwealth' or not. It is also necessary to draw a distinction between the Singapore Declaration in 1971 refusing coercion as a means of policy in the Commonwealth with Commonwealth military cooperation more broadly. Although it was very clear that the style of military cooperation previously undertaken by the Commonwealth was at odds with this new approach, the Commonwealth was not ruling out military cooperation entirely. The creation of the monitoring force in Rhodesia drew upon a long-standing tradition of joint Commonwealth military activity but funnelled it in a very different political direction. The end result was the creation of a style of Commonwealth cooperation that was very new. However, the older style of Commonwealth cooperation continued even if it was no longer associated with the Commonwealth.

This continuation of the older style of Commonwealth cooperation was significantly reduced in scale to that which had previously been undertaken. While the ramifications of the Singapore declaration in 1971 on the practicalities of cross-Commonwealth defence cooperation was negligible, since the 1960s there had been a reduction in these endeavours in line with the reorientation of strategic interests to a more national focus. The continued interest in South-East Asia from all parties originally involved was aided by sheer proximity and the existence of reasonable capabilities.[43] In other regions, where such proximity and capability did not exist, the drive for multinational cooperation was non-existent. Endeavours had been made, for example, to form a federation out of the remaining British territories in the Caribbean. Although this had failed by 1962 further attempts were made at something similar for decades after.[44] The invasion of Grenada in 1983, nor the underlying cause which prompted the invasion, was not met with any substantive action by the Commonwealth. Similarly, in the same region, the Belize-Guatemalan dispute saw support only from the UK. Although the Belize-Guatemalan conflict was less volatile than the situation in Malaya during the Emergency, the attention it received from the Commonwealth more generally was limited to expressions of political support and diplomatic

[43] These were Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom.
[44] R. Cox-Alomar, 'Britain's Withdrawal from the Eastern Caribbean 1965-67' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31 (2003) p 74

endeavours at the UN.[45] It was nevertheless a tangible reflection of the change in strategic priorities within the Commonwealth from the 1970s onward. The defence of the constituent elements of the Commonwealth now ranked a poor second compared to the absolute need to maintain a self-proclaimed moral high ground (at least on issues other than religion).

In effect the Commonwealth was transformed from an organisation with a very clear-cut military role into a much more broad international organisation interested in the internal policies of its members rather than their collective or individual security.[46] This placed the Commonwealth, after the opening years of the 1980s, in an interesting position on the geopolitical landscape. It served as a forum for the growth of international ideals that were espoused by new Commonwealth countries. These ideals had been given substance with the announcement of the Singapore declaration in 1971 and indicated the direction of the organisation. In a sense the British aim to use the Commonwealth as a means of the preservation of its influence in the world worked. It became a vehicle for the advancement of influence and ideals in the post-war period. It simply was not representative of British influence and ideals, or even the ideals and concepts that had previously underpinned the Commonwealth.

[45] R. Sanders, 'The Commonwealth as a Champion of Small States' p 83 in J. Mayal (ed), *The Contemporary Commonwealth: An Assessment 1965-2009* (London: Routledge, 2010).

[46] Indeed there seemed to have been a belief held in British political circles, and expressed by Mr. Watkinson in his role as Minister of Defence in 1961, that because South Africa was 'now an independent country' that 'we [the United Kingdom] are not responsible [for its defence]'. The implication being clear, given that the comments were made shortly after South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, that there could well have been some responsibility for its defence were it still within the Commonwealth. This in fact was the view of the South Africa government as they reviewed Mr. Watkinson's parliamentary replies. - Report of the Visit of Minister of Defence to London 21 July 1961 MV 128/12 File Besoek aan Buiteland Minister en Geselskap SANDFA

Conclusion

Argument

This thesis has argued that there were, in effect, four stages of development in Commonwealth defence since 1947. The first started in 1947 as the UK, and the rest of the Commonwealth, realised the serious implications for the defence of the Empire and the Commonwealth following the independence of India and the rapid development of new advanced technologies. These developments had somewhat undermined existing military strategies. The second stage beginning in the early 1950s started when the UK and the Commonwealth started to address those implications through regional defence structures while remaining cognizant of the international situation. The third stage in the 1960s was dominated by how international and domestic pressures undermined the regional structures that arose from the second stage and the consequences of the expansion of the Commonwealth and the rise in the importance of the US on defence issues. Finally, the last stage was heralded by the Singapore Declaration of 1971 and saw the Commonwealth as a whole develop its own outlook on defence cooperation, an outlook independent of how Commonwealth defence cooperation had manifested before. This stage was complicated by the parallel continuation of a reduced, but extant, version of Commonwealth defence cooperation of a kind similar to Commonwealth defence cooperation before 1971.

The distinction between pre- and post-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation is crucial. Pre-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation focused on the territorial defence of the countries of the Commonwealth, and did not require the full participation or assent of the Commonwealth. Post-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation was based on a rejection of force as a means of engagement within the Commonwealth, which was subsequently redefined to accept a form and format of defence cooperation that supported a peacekeeping role in line with Commonwealth values. Post-1971 Commonwealth defence cooperation was based on the ideals and desires of the majority in the new and expanded Commonwealth. Such new ideals were notably not representative of the key countries in the Commonwealth which had previously driven Commonwealth defence cooperation.

The continued presence of an unspoken Commonwealth defence cooperation that did not rely on the unanimous approval of the Commonwealth membership lay in the roots of Commonwealth defence cooperation dating back to Irish neutrality during the Second World War. The precedent that Commonwealth defence cooperation could exist without the assent of the whole organisation of the

Commonwealth had been well-established and could even be traced back to Canadian participation in the Boer war, or South Africa's resistance to deploy during the First World War. Subsequent developments in the 1950s, particularly regarding the defence of the Middle East, further emphasised how decoupled the political Commonwealth structure had become from Commonwealth defence cooperation. Commonwealth defence cooperation, of the form that was known and recognisable as such since 1947, had much more in common with organisations like the Five Powers Defence Arrangements and the 28th ANZUK Brigade than it had with the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force in Rhodesia.

That is at the heart of the explanation offered here for the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation between 1947 and 1982. There were two paths along which Commonwealth defence cooperation progressed after 1971. On one path there is a clear continuation of cooperation fulfilling Commonwealth strategic goals that loses the title Commonwealth but changes nothing in substance. On the other path there is a clear political expression of what Commonwealth military activity should be, and this was clearly demonstrated with the Commonwealth Electoral Monitoring Force. The reasons behind that dual-outcome progression of Commonwealth defence relations can be explained by pointing to the prevailing attitudes of new Commonwealth countries to defence questions, Commonwealth relations particularly regarding race and religion, the technology available, a variety of nation-specific difficulties in Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the UK, and the rising importance of local defence issues in national considerations. This was not a particularly inviting atmosphere for the continuation of the global scale of defence cooperation that the Commonwealth had showcased in the First and Second World Wars. Yet, it is clear that South-East Asia developed into a bastion of Commonwealth activity. A stable basis of cooperation amongst new and existing Commonwealth countries was brought into existence in a process that was not replicated elsewhere. The cooperation was Commonwealth in its objectives and practices, as it would have been understood before 1971. It continued, largely unabated, whether the adjective 'Commonwealth' was applied or not.

The unspoken commitment to the territorial defence of the member states of the Commonwealth, as had existed before 1971 and extended to include Singapore and Malaysia since 1957 with the creation of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Area, continued through the FPDA. The creation of the AMDA in 1957, in part to provide a basis for Australian and New Zealand contributions to the

region, highlighted the distinctiveness of Commonwealth activity in South-East Asia. Equally it demonstrated the underlying break that had been made between 1939 and 1957 in terms of the expectations Commonwealth countries had of each other. After 1971 with the creation of the FPDA the situation in South-East Asia effectively returned to the state of affairs that had existed throughout the Commonwealth in 1939. The expectation of defence may have been present, but there existed no obligation or requirement. Compare this level of cooperation and interest with the Commonwealth reaction to the Falklands, the Guatemala-Belize conflict, and the coup and subsequent US invasion of Grenada. The Commonwealth reaction to the Falklands war was lacklustre. India's support for the UK was present, but circumspect. Even older members of the Commonwealth, such as Canada, Australia, and even New Zealand provided little in the way of support. A small warship from New Zealand, that was not to be deployed to the combat zone, marked the high point of what was an embarrassingly paltry cooperative effort. Indeed, much like the Suez crisis, there was greater cooperation and involvement between French and British forces than there was between the members of the Commonwealth. The Caribbean, hardly a hotbed of Commonwealth cooperation but equally far from free of its own troubles, provided ample opportunity for defence cooperation. The border dispute between Guatemala and Belize saw little more than a half-hearted effort from the UK in securing Belize's external defence and near-complete disinterest from other Commonwealth countries.

Evolution, and nomenclature

The style and form of Commonwealth defence cooperation was constantly changing in response to technological and political developments. It is important to recognize that this would have occurred irrespective of developments in the Commonwealth. Commonwealth defence cooperation before 1951 was largely predicated on the concept that it would be possible for manpower and material to be transferred from around the world to the affected region and be operationally and strategically viable once transported. The reality of long-range bombers and nuclear weapons of various types made this an increasingly unlikely prospect. Although the shift from a global to a regional approach followed these developments, there was some brief consideration of the viability of the older approach to defence continuing in spite of these developments. This was conceptualised in the theory of Broken Backed Warfare. While a fundamentally flawed doctrine it was nevertheless indicative of the attempts made to adapt existing Commonwealth defence cooperation to the realities of contemporary warfare.

As Commonwealth defence cooperation was expected, and indeed obliged, to change during the 1950s to account for the new technological developments, it also had to adapt to new political realities. It was this many-faceted drive for strategic change in the period that gave rise to an illusion that decolonisation was at the heart of change in cooperation. In fact the decolonisation process was but one factor in the overall progression of the cross-Commonwealth defence relationship. The rapidly and extensively changing requirements for the UK, and indeed the rest of the Commonwealth, in the organisation and employment of their armed forces was certainly affected by the sheer size of the territory transferred to new states. Additionally, these changes prompted reduced priority to be given to a variety of regions involved in plans for an overall Commonwealth defence. This was especially true of those regions, such as the Indian subcontinent, which had previously been a priority to defend in the past but were now untenable or no longer as relevant.

Although the contribution of new Commonwealth countries to Commonwealth defence cooperation is outside the scope of this study it is important to acknowledge that the increased conflict of national priorities prompted a different approach to Commonwealth defence cooperation in specific circumstances. Cooperation with South Africa, in particular, was challenged and led to a decline in technological and logistic cooperation and uniformity.

Furthermore, a question arises as to whether there can only be a single thread of cooperation which can be accurately labelled as Commonwealth defence cooperation. Commonwealth cooperation before 1971 was characterised by a flexibility of membership and a liberal approach to the use of the Commonwealth title. The lack of involvement by certain Commonwealth countries had little or no effect on the existence of defence cooperation. In recognising this, however, the revocation of the title 'Commonwealth' from military formations in 1971 becomes clear as a defining moment in the evolution of Commonwealth defence cooperation. Although the practical implications were minor, it reflected a change in approach to Commonwealth defence cooperation that indicated a major shift in how Commonwealth defence cooperation was to be approached and handled – and, for our purposes, how it should be studied.

Interest & engagement

One of the more curious aspects about the development of Commonwealth defence cooperation

must certainly be the varying level of interest in the political establishments of the different Commonwealth countries for such activity. There is also a distinction that needs to be made between interest and the capability to act on that interest meaningfully. Canada and South Africa, for instance, both had very little interest in becoming overly involved in Commonwealth military cooperation. Although their interest was diminished for very different reasons they demonstrated a capability to cooperate substantially and meaningfully over the course of the period.[1] Canada demonstrated that capability through its contribution to the 1st Commonwealth Division, while South Africa did so through ongoing bilateral military exchange with the UK directly. Indeed the Canadian contribution to the Division was the largest after the UK itself. South African involvement was much more strategic in nature. The arrangements regarding Simonstown between South Africa and the UK helped ensure a route from the UK to the pillar of Commonwealth cooperation in South-East Asia.[2] This effectively ensured an alternative route to the Far East remained open. This avoided the problems the British faced in the Middle East which had become clear during the Suez Crisis.

Australia and New Zealand (and it is difficult to separate the two in respect of Commonwealth defence cooperation) are rather different. Both had a clear and active interest in Commonwealth cooperation. Indeed the security of both countries required a global cooperative approach to defence. Although that reliance had not yielded consistent or favourable results, a reorientation to their own local defence did not occur until all available possibilities regarding securing British (or American) support had failed. Australian and New Zealand representatives were not only present at the Middle East Defence Conference in 1950, but were eager to contribute. It was only following a recognition of the difficulties, brought on by political and technological change, with the development in the 1960s of regionally based defence organisations that their interests correspondingly shifted.

The UK certainly benefited the most from these cooperative efforts. However, the typically small size of these endeavours paled in comparison to the sheer scale of the task faced by the British

[1] Canada's interests were directed at its global role as a 'middle power' in the new international landscape. Meanwhile South Africa's interest in Commonwealth activities declined amongst its politicians over the Commonwealth and the complications that arose out of its policy of apartheid.

[2] This had been openly recognised in the exchanges of letters between the United Kingdom and South Africa regarding the continued use of the base and access to important facilities such as wireless telegraphy installations, accommodation and offices. It also allowed for the creation of a 'joint maritime war planning committee' to coordinate joint efforts as the need should arise. Operational control of the region would, however, rest with the senior Royal Navy commander for the region. - See 'Exchanges of Letters on Defence matters between Governments of the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom June 1955' MV 190 Simonstad SANDFA

military in the post-war years. Despite some successes in the field of Commonwealth defence relations the type and scale of Commonwealth support took a very different form. It had become focused on the supply of specific capabilities from the Commonwealth to supplement existing British military strength. The 1st Commonwealth Division is an example of this supply of specialist capabilities following the inclusion of an Indian Field Ambulance. Other examples of this can be seen throughout the period. The deployment of Rhodesia, Australia, and New Zealand special forces to Malaysia during Confrontation, for example, emphasised the contribution of capabilities rather than the supply of core troop elements. The possibility of this sort of specialised contribution suited the political atmosphere of many Commonwealth countries. It also avoided placing an undue burden on Commonwealth countries to contribute to the effort, allowing even small states to contribute to deployments – as Rhodesia did in Malaysia.

These contributions were in addition to more conventional involvement. Although only a small percentage of the total amount necessary for the UK to achieve their goals was supplied by the Commonwealth on this basis, it is illustrative of the strength of such connections that such cooperation continued longest where the contribution from the Commonwealth was greatest. The 28th Commonwealth Brigade (subsequently the ANZUK Brigade) represented, in effect, a greater shared capability with respect to the amount of resources employed by any one participant. Provided agreement could be found on role and employment, as it was in South-East Asia between Australia, New Zealand, and the UK with respect to their jointly operated brigade, this style of cooperation represented a type of force multiplication of available resources that possessed greater efficiency of expenditure than could be attained by any individual state operating independently. The UK was perhaps better placed than most other imperial powers to take advantage of this given their relative success in the decolonisation process, significantly so if one was to include the Dominions in that process. Complications arising out of domestic political priorities must be seen against similar changes occurring in the UK as well. Although it is certainly true that changing strategic and political realities forced a refocusing on the immediate national defence by the 1980s, the decolonisation process removed the *raison d'etre* for the UK to deploy significant troop numbers overseas. The last remnants of its empire may still have proved problematic to defend but the need and interest in defence cooperation in pursuit of the external defence of the Empire (or now the Commonwealth) had all but ended.

Post-1982 issues

The invasion of Grenada by the US in 1983 provides some final insight into some of the issues raised here. Joint Commonwealth activities which had been central to combating uprisings and communist elements elsewhere were noticeably absent in the Caribbean. The Regional Security System founded in 1982 is an interesting example of a post-1972 defence organisation which included a number of Commonwealth countries. It was formed to address certain security concerns which the Commonwealth as a whole had declined to engage with since 1971.[3] In fact, since its establishment the Regional Security System has dealt solely with internal policing and military assistance – such as providing relief efforts following natural disasters, coups, serious criminal problems and other disturbances. The Regional Security System was another example of the style of cooperation that had resulted in the Five Power Defence Arrangements. It, in effect, provided for the joint defence of nearby Commonwealth states in a style and manner that would have been familiar to Commonwealth initiatives of the early 1950s.

What the invasion of Grenada made very clear was that the Commonwealth did not support organisations like the RSS, and it could not even be counted upon to support their interests in the public arena.[4] The origins of the RSS and its links to the Federation of the West Indies and subsequent developments, including the invasion of Grenada, is beyond the scope of this study. Yet the RSS highlighted the basis for defence cooperation, a basis established in Commonwealth history, that was never capitalised on by the Commonwealth or the UK but was instead usurped by the US.[5]

Subsequent developments in Commonwealth defence relations amongst Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and the UK after the Falklands War are also outside the scope of this study, but helpfully contextualise developments. South African involvement with the Commonwealth did not resume until 1994.[6] Cooperation since then has been based on a more international basis, particularly with the UN, and with the emphasis on peacekeeping operations on the African continent. The supply

---

3 A. Bakan, D. Cox, & C. Leys, *Imperial Power and Regional Trade: The Caribbean Basin Initiative* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993) p 54

4 It is notable that the RSS was supportive of the invasion of Grenada, which was publicly condemned by Canada, the UK, and the rest of the Commonwealth at the UN.

5 H. Muniz, *Boots, Boots, Boots: Intervention, Regional Security and Militarisation in the Caribbean* (Rio Piedras: Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace, 1987) p 6

6 I. Taylor, *Stuck in Middle Gear: South Africa's Post-apartheid Foreign Relations* (London: Praeger, 2001) p 154

of armaments to South Africa maintained that pattern. Cooperation, in effect, had all but ended and had not been renewed or relaunched following the alteration of South Africa's domestic policies and its re-admittance to the Commonwealth. Canada similarly stuck to its position with respect to Commonwealth cooperation. Its focus has remained on international peacekeeping, particularly in conjunction with the UN. It was with respect to the US rather than the UK or other members of the Commonwealth that Canada continued to be involved in more conventional defence cooperation. Although the increased level of cooperation in defence matters with the US grew even after 1971, Commonwealth-only cooperation continued in South-East Asia. The creation of a permanent force stationed in Malaysia constituted forces from all five signatories to the FPDA. Although somewhat removed from the active employment of such forces and organisational efforts like the 28th Commonwealth Brigade the constant continuation of such efforts, even on a limited scale, suggests that such cooperation survived in spite of new developments.

The endeavours of both Australia and New Zealand to encourage US deployments to the region had met with success coming in the form of ANZUS in 1951. In the 1950s the Antipodean Dominions interest in engaging with the US separately to the UK caused some backlash in British political and military circles. Anglo-New Zealand-Australian cooperation, which had continued substantially until 1971 was no longer a primary basis of the defence of the region or of Australia and New Zealand specifically. Commonwealth cooperation was very much relegated to second position and the absence of the US was not replaced by the UK when difficulties had quite clearly arisen.

This was in line with the direction that Commonwealth defence cooperation appeared to develop following the UK retreat from East of Suez. Cooperation, although it still existed, was steadily scaled back and reduced in favour of other mechanisms for a combined defence. Where such cooperation continued and maintained its vigour it was in concert with the US and regional organisations, which typically included four of the five members under study here (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK), that had a basis in post-war inter-operability efforts. One example of such cooperation can be seen in the ABCA armies international group, which included all four in some form by 1965 and in full status by 2006.[7] The Air and Space Interoperability Council also included all four

[7] New Zealand was only included as an associate member in 1965 by Australia's explicit request. - T. Durrell-Young, 'Cooperative Diffusion through Cultural Similarity: The Postwar Anglo-Saxon Experience' in E. Goldman, and L. Eliason (eds), *The Diffusion of Military Technology and Ideas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) p 108

by 1965. The Technical Cooperation Programme, included all five by 1969.[8] This built on similar intelligence organisations and cooperative efforts which had been established between 1945 and 1955.[9] This basis of interoperability created a structured version of what had developed between the UK and the Commonwealth nations naturally: national forces that operated much the same equipment and utilised similar tactics, doctrine, and were favourably disposed to cooperation.

Conclusion

Joint Commonwealth military activity has its roots in the earliest forms of imperial coordination and worldwide deployments.[10] The employment of Australia and New Zealand forces in the Middle East and the Mediterranean, Canadian forces in Europe, and British forces in the jungles of the Far East were a common sight in the first half of the twentieth century. Rapid political and technological change since 1947 undermined that global system of defence and coordination. The practical realities of contemporary war, especially when the potential effect of nuclear weapons were considered, were fundamentally at odds with such a system. The reorientation to a regionally based defence in the 1950s was an effort to reduce the financial and manpower burden. However, it was also a recognition of the fact that world-wide conflict, like that seen during First World War and Second World War could no longer rely on the infrastructure required for such long-range and extensive coordination continuing for long into the conflict.

Political developments external to the Commonwealth further complicated this by undermining already precarious supply lines between significant bastions of military force amongst the Commonwealth. Political developments internal to the Commonwealth, mostly but certainly not all, centred around the difficulties of a rapidly expanding Commonwealth which threatened to undermine the political basis of the entire system of well-established cooperation. It speaks to the resilience of the flexible and informal Commonwealth system of defence cooperation – as it was originally envisaged

---

8 E. Goldman and L. Eliason (eds), *The Diffusion of Military Technology and Ideas* (Stanford University Press, 2003) p 105

9 Intelligence cooperation between the United Kingdom and the United States had been ongoing throughout, and after, the Second World War. This was subsequently expanded in 1955 to include Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. - Annexure J1 to Annex J to Amendment no. 4 to the Appendices to the UKUSA Agreement (Third Edition) HW-80-11 UKNA

10 This is not, however, to say that this remained static. It changed significantly over the period. So much so in fact that there remained an undercurrent of a desire in certain sections of the British services to 'return to the Commonwealth planning of old'. - Letter from Commissioner General Rob Scott to COS Secretariat, 6th December 1957 DEFE 11/192 UKNA

and executed – that it survived this turbulent period of change in some form. What is perhaps even more remarkable is that it managed to survive in spite of the fact that it became effectively disowned by the Commonwealth! Although much can, and indeed should, be made of this rather bizarre accomplishment none of this takes from the fact that Commonwealth defence cooperation, as it existed at the dawn of the 1980s, was a pale comparison to such cooperation from decades earlier. Its scope and extent had changed drastically.

The New Commonwealth – ever anxious as it was to do its utmost to act contrary to the original vision of the organisation – brought a strange new approach to the Commonwealth defence relations.[11] The deployment of troops to ensure the internal politics of a Commonwealth country were suitable to prevailing political opinion would have sparked outrage before 1949. Whatever might be said about the particulars of such efforts it must be recognised that it did endeavour to restart Commonwealth defence cooperation in some manner. A limited, and a little underwhelming in comparison perhaps, but a nevertheless extant body of Commonwealth troops performing a Commonwealth function together.

It is clear that Commonwealth defence cooperation took two forms: the first offered a style and form of military cooperation that was amenable to the new political atmosphere of the Commonwealth, and the second continued 'Commonwealth' cooperation under the guise of bilateral and multilateral engagements. Although the particulars had changed somewhat, the core purpose and realisation of cooperation was still fundamentally the same. The uniqueness and ad-hoc nature of the Commonwealth, which had adapted to changes in the international situation since the end of the Second World War, once more emphasised its ability to adapt itself to suit the prevailing political desires. However, in an era of increasing reliance on multinational initiatives and projects it is surprising that Commonwealth defence cooperation decreased as significantly as it did. Lester Pearson's assertion that 'only self-interest would hold the new Commonwealth together' was prophetic of both the inward-orientated nature of the Commonwealth's new take on defence relations and of the growing distance between the countries of the Commonwealth.[12]

---

[11] This in itself was not an unusual reaction during the decolonisation process. Elements and symbols of imperial rule were often the subject of internal disturbances both of an illegal nature and as a result of direct policy by the new government. In most cases this was restricted to a relatively limited effect on the local economy, but in some areas – such as East Africa – the result could be disastrous. - I. Maekawa, 'Neocolonialism Reconsidered: A Case Study of East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 43 (2015) p 320

[12] J. Munro and A. Inglis (eds), *Mike: the Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume* 2 *1948-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973) p 106

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

United Kingdom National Archives, London, UK (UKNA)

AIR 19: Air Ministry, and Ministry of Defence, Air Department: Private Office Papers

ADM 114: Navy Board and Admiralty: Victualling Department and predecessors: Miscellanea

PREM 11: Prime Minister's Office: Correspondence and Papers, 1951-1964

CAB 128: Cabinet: Minutes (CM and CC Series)

CAB 131: Cabinet: Defence Committee Minutes and papers (DO, D, and DC Series)

CAB 133: Cabinet Office: Commonwealth and International Conferences and Ministerial Visits to and from the UK Minutes and Papers (ABC and other Series)

CAB 134: Cabinet Miscellaneous Committees Minutes and Papers (General Series)

DEFE 5: Ministry of Defence – Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda

DEFE 7: Ministry of Defence prior to 1964

DEFE 11: Ministry of Defence Chiefs of Staff Committee

DO 35: Dominions Office and Commonwealth Relations Office

DO 164: Commonwealth Relations Office: Defence (DEF Series)

DO 169: Commonwealth Relations Office and Commonwealth Office – Far East and Pacific Department (FE Series)

EG 1: United Kingdom Atomic Energy Policy Minutes, Papers and Registered files

FO 371: Foreign Office Political Departments – General Correspondence from 1906 - 1966

HW 80: Government Communications Headquarters and Predecessor

Australian National Archives, Canberra, Australia (ANA)

A1209: Prime Minister's Department 1957 – 1971, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 1971 – current

A1838: Department of External Affairs 1948 – 1970, Department of Foreign Affairs 1970 - 1987

A4940: Menzies and Holt Ministries – Cabinet files 'C'

A5952: Atomic tests in Australia

A5954: Department of Defence: Cooperation in British Commonwealth defence – Aides Memoire for India, Pakistan, and South Africa

Archives of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand (ANZ)

AAFD 811: Cabinet Office files 1948 – current

South Africa National Defence Force Archives, Pretoria, South Africa (SANDFA)

MV 103: Verdedigingsbeleid Volume 1

MV 103/1: Australiese - Aangeleenthede

MV 128: De boek aan de Verenigde Koninkrijk

MV 132: Aankoop van Wapentuig

MV 148: Amalgamation of Reduction of British Regiments

MV 190: Simonstad

MV 196: Bagdad – Ooreenkoms

MV 200: Verdediging van Afrika

MV 201: Besoeke aan die Republiek

MV 203: Die Vlootbond van Suid-Afrika

MV 204: Air Defence Scheme

MV 207: Samesprekings: Minister en Sir P. Liesching

MV 208: Weeklikse Inligtingsamevatting

MV 217: Notules

MV-B 2: Geheime Stukke ontvang van buitelandse sake

Library & Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada (LAC)

MG 26 L: Lester Pearson papers

RG 24: Department of National Defence

RG 25: Department of External Affairs

RG 27: Department of Labour

Other Primary Material

Canada's Defence Programme 1956-57 (Ottawa: Queen's Printers 1957)

Cmnd. 537, *Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom... and the Government of the United States... for Cooperation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes* (3 July 1958)

Cmnd. 2901, *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1966 Part I: The Defence Review* (February 1966)

Cmnd. 9075, *Statement on Defence, 1954* (February 1954)

Cmnd. 9520, *Exchange of Letters with the Government of the Union of South Africa on the Transfer of the Simonstown Naval Base and Arrangements for its Future Use* (30 June 1955)

Commonwealth of Australia, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, March 1987 (Canberra Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994)

Dail Eireann Debates Volume 114 No. 12 'Ceisteanna: Oral Answers – The North Atlantic Treaty' Tuesday 29 March 1949, available at https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1949-03-29/7/

General Assembly Resolution 1001, *Resolution 1001*, A/RES/1000 (ES-I) (5 November 1956)

General Assembly Resolution 1762, *The Urgent Need for Suspension of Nuclear and Thermo-nuclear Tests*, A/RES/1761 (XVII) (6 November 1962)

General Assembly Resolution 186, *The Appointment and Terms of Reference of a United Nations Mediator in Palestine,* A/RES/186 (S-2) (14 May 1948)

Keefer Edward & Glennon John (eds) *Foreign Relations of the US 1961-1963* Volume 2 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1991)

Nixon R., *Public Papers of the Presidents of the US, Richard Nixon, 1969* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Printing Press, 2005)

Stockwell A.J. (ed) British Documents on the End of Empire Series B Volume 8 *Malaysia* 2004 (London: The Stationary Office, 2004)

Sydney Morning Herald 24 November 1964

The Star (Johannesburg) 31 July and 1 August 1956

UN Security Council Resolution 47, *The India-Pakistan Question*, S/RES/47 (21 April 1948)

UN Security Council Resolution 191, *Question Relating to the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa*, S/RES/190 (9 June 1964)

UN Security Council Resolution 282, *The Question of Race Conflict in South Africa resulting from the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa,* S/RES/282 (23 July 1970)

Secondary sources:

Books:

Ali, Michael. *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy 1971-1998* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Badash, Lawrence *A Nuclear Winter's Tale* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2009)

Badsey, Stephen, Mark Grove, and Rob Havers (eds.) *The Falklands Conflict Twenty years On* (London: Frank Cass, 2005)

Bakan, Abigail, David Cox, and Colin Leys C (eds) *Imperial Power and Regional Trade: The Caribbean Basin Initiative* (Ottawa: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993)

Baylis, John, *The Diplomacy of Pragmatism: Britain and the Formation of NATO 1942-1949* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1993)

Bentley, Geoffrey & Maurice Conley, *Portrait of an Air Force* (Wellington: Grantham House, 1987)

Beloff, Max, *Imperial Sunset: Dream of Commonwealth 1921-1942* (London: Macmillan 1985)

Black, Jeremy, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2015)

Botti, Timothy, *Ace in the Hole: Why the US did not use Nuclear Weapons in the Cold War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996)

Brawley, Sean, *The White Peril: Foreign Relations and Asian Immigrations to Australasia and North America* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1995)

Carroll, Michael, *Pearson's Peacekeepers: Canada and the UN Emergency Force 1956-67* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009)

Chernus, Ira, *Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace* (Austin: Texas A&M University Press, 2002)

Chin, K., *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Clark, Ian & Nicholas Wheeler, *The British Origins of Nuclear Strategy* (London: Clarendon Press, 1989)

Clearwater, John, *US Nuclear Weapons in Canada* (Toronto: Kirk Howard, 1999)

Cock, Jacklyn and Penny McKenzie, *From Defence to Development: Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa* (Claremont: David Philip Publishers Ltd, 1998)

Conrad, John, *Scarce Heard Amid the guns: An Inside Look at Canadian Peacekeeping* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2011)

Darby, Phillip, *British Defence Policy East of Suez,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Darwin, John, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-War World* (London:

Macmillan Education Ltd, 1988)

Darwin, John, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991)

Davies, Bruce and Gary McKay, *The Men Who Persevered* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2005)

Davis, Richard, *British Decolonisation 1918-1984* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013)

Denoon, Donald, *A Trial Separation: Australia and the Decolonisation of Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2012)

Doxey, M., *The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Contemporary Commonwealth* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989)

Durr, Eveline, *Culture as Experience: Belonging in Oceania: Movement, Place-Making, and Multiple Identifications* (London: Routledge, 2015)

Edwards, Peter, & Pemberton, Greg, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in South-East Asian Conflicts* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992)

Freedman, Lawrence, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign Volume 2: War and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2005)

French, David, *Army, Empire, and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy 1945-1971* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Friedman, Norman, *British Destroyers and Frigates: The Second World War and After* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2012)

Futrell Robert Frank, Lawson S. Moseley, and Albert F. Simpson, *The US Air Force in Korean 1950-1953* (New York: Literary Licensing LLC, 2012)

Gallagher, John, *The Decline. Revival and Fall of the British Empire* (Cambrdige: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Gibran, Daniel, *The Falklands War: Britain versus the Past in the South Atlantic,* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998)

Grey, Jeffrey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

Grey, Jeffrey, *A Military History of Australia* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Goldman, Emily, and Leslie Eliason (eds) *The Diffusion of Military Technology and Ideas* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 2003)

Heinlein, Frank, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation 1945-63* (London: Frank Cass

publishers, 2002)

Herstien, H, L. J. Hughes, and R.C. Kirbyson, C*hallenge & Survival: The History of Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970)

Hilliker, John, and Donald Barry, *Canada's Department of External Affairs Volume 2: Coming of Age 1946-1968* (Ottawa: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1995)

Hollowell, Jonathan, *Britain since 1945* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008)

Holdstock Douglas, and Frank Barnaby (eds.), *The British Nuclear Weapons Programme 1952-2002* (London: Frank Cass, 2003)

Howe, Stephen, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Homs James, and Wyndraeth Morris-Jones, *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (London: Frank Cass Ltd, 2005)

Hyam, Ronald, and Peter Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok:Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Jackson, Ashley, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006)

Johnson, Robert, and Timothy Clack (eds), *At the End of Military Intervention: Historical Theoretical and Applied Approaches to Transition, Handover, and Withdrawal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Karnad, Bharat, *India's Nuclear Policy* (London: Praeger Security International, 2008)

Kenny, Kevin, *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Keogh, Dermot, and Andrew McCarthy, *The Making of the Irish Constitution 1937* (Cork: Cork University Press Ireland, 2007)

Klotz, Audie, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999)

Koops, Joachim, Norrie MacQueen, Thierry Tardy, and Paul Williams (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of UN Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Larsen, J., and J. Wirtz (eds), *Naval Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations: Stability from the Sea* (London: Routledge, 2009)

Louis. W.R., *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez, and Decolonisation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Louis, W.R., and Robin Winks, *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Louis W. R., and Judith Brown (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Louis W.R. and R. Woen, *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Lowe, Peter, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies towards Japan, China and Korea 1948-53,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Low, Anthony, *The Eclipse of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Lowe, Peter, *Containing the Cold War in East Asia: British Policies towards Japan, China and Korea 1948-53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

MacKenzie, David, *Inside the Atlantic Triangle: Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland 1939-49* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986)

Malone, Greg, *Don't Tell the Newfoundlanders* (Toronto: Alfred Knopf, 2012)

Mansergh, Nicholas, and Diana Mansergh *Nationalism and Independence: Selected Irish Papers* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997)

Mayal, James, *The Contemporary Commonwealth: An Assessment 1965-2009* (London: Routledge, 2010)

McEvoy, Joanne, *The Politics of Northern Ireland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)

McCabe, Ian, *The Formulation and consequences of the Republic of Ireland Act 1948-49* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science ,1990)

McGibbon, Ian, *New Zealand's Vietnam War: A History of Combat, Commitment and Controversy* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2010)

McIntyre, David, *Winding Up the British Empire in the Pacific Islands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Menzies, Robert, *Afternoon Light* (Melbourne: Cassel, 1967)

Miller, JDB., *The Commonwealth and the World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967)

Milner, Marc, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000)

Miskovic, Natasa, Tine Fischer, and Nada Boskovska (eds), *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi – Bandung – Belgrade* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Morris-Jones, W.H., and Georges Fischer, *Decolonisation and After* (London: Frank Cass Ltd, 1980)

Moore, John, *South Africa and Nuclear Proliferation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

Muniz, Humberto.,*Boots, Boots, Boots: Intervention, Regional Security and Militarisation in the Caribbean* (Rio Piedras: Caribbean Project for Justice and Peace, 1987)

Munro, John, and Alex Inglis (eds) *Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, volume* 2 *1948-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973)

Navias, M., *Nuclear Weapons and British Strategic Planning* (London: Clarendon Press, 1991)

O'Neill, John, and Nicholas Rees, *UN Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold war Era* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Onwumechili, Chuka, *African Democratization and Military Coups* (London: Praeger, 1998)

Papcosma, Victor, *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc conflicts* (Kent: Kent University Press, 2008)

Pearson, Lester, *The Commonwealth 1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971)

Pemberton, Gregory, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987)

Perkovich, George, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001)

Percox, David, *Britain, Kenya, and the Cold War: Imperial Defence, Colonial Security, and Decolonisation* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004)

Pichat, Stephen, *A UN legion: Between Utopia and Reality* (London: Frank Cass Ltd, 2004)

Rabinotwiz, Or, *Bargaining on Nuclear Tests: Washington and its Cold War Deals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Reynolds, Wayne, *Australia's Bid for the Atomic Bomb* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000)

Rolfe, Jim, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999)

Rouvez. Alain, Michael Coco, and Jean-Paul Paddack, *Disconsolate Empires: French, British and Belgian Military Involvement in Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: University Press of America, 1994)

Schrafstetter, S., and S. Twigge, *Avoiding Armageddon: Europe, the US and the Struggle for Nuclear Non-Proliferation 1945-1970* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2004)

Sisson, Richard, and Leo Rose *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990)

Smith, Anthony. *South-East Asia and New Zealand: A History of Regional and Bilateral Relations* (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs & Victoria University Press, 2005)

Spooner, Kevin, *Canada, the Congo Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping 1960-64* (Vancouver: UBC Press,

2009)

Srinivasan, K., *The Rise, Decline, and Future of the British Commonwealth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Stoddart, K., *Losing an Empire and Finding a Role: Britain, the USA, NATO, and Nuclear Weapons 1964-1970* (London: Macmillan, 2012)

Stultz, Newell, *Afrikaner Politics in South Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974)

Sutton, Alex, *The Political Economy of Imperial Relations: Britain, the Sterling Area, and Malaya 1945-1960* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Taylor, Ian, *Stuck in Middle Gear: South Africa's Post-Apartheid Foreign Relations* (London: Praeger, 2001)

Thatcher, Margaret. *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd, 2012)

Watson, Graham, and Richard Rinaldi, *The British Army in Germany: An organisational history 1947-2004* (Newport: Tiger Lily publications, 2005)

Wood, JRT, *So Far and No Further* (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2012)

Wood, James, *The Forgotten Force: The Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan 1945-52* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998)

Wood, Pia, and David Sorenson (eds) *The Politics of Peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War Era* (London: Frank Cass, 2005)

Woodard, G., *Asian Alternatives* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2006)

Yesilbursa, Kemal B., *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East 1950-59* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Young, Brian, and John Dickinson *A short History of Quebec* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008)

Journal articles:

Ashton, Nigel, 'A Special Relationship Sometimes in Spite of Ourselves: Britain and Jordan 1957-73', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 33 (2005), 221-244.

Ashton, S. R., 'British Government Perspectives on the Commonwealth 1964-71: An Asset or a Liability?', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 35 (2007), 73-94.

Battersby, John, 'New Zealand, Domestic Jurisdiction, and Apartheid 1945-57', *Journal of Imperial and*

*Commonwealth History, 2*4 (1996), 101-117

Barua, P., 'Strategies and Doctrines of Imperial Defence: Britain and India 1919-1945', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 25 (1996), 240-266.

Baylis, John & Alan Macmillan 'The British Global Strategy Paper of 1952', *Journal of Strategic Studies,* 16 (1993), 200-26.

Benvenuti, Andrei, 'Australian Attempts to Forestall Britain's Military Disengagement from South-East Asia, 1965-1966', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 20 (2009), 86-106

Benvenuti, Andrei, 'Australian Reactions to Britain's Declining Presence in South-East Asia 1955-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 34 (2006), 407-29.

Brands, H.W., 'India and Pakistan in American Strategic Planning 1947-54: The Commonwealth as a Collaborator', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 15 (1986), 41-54.

Butler, L.J., 'Britain, the United States, and the Demise of the Central African Federation 1959-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 131-51.

Cell, John, 'On the Eve of Decolonisation: The Colonial Office's Plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa 1947', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 3 (1980), 235-57.

Chan, Stephen, and Okoth Mudhai 'Commonwealth Residualism and the Machinations of Power in a Turbulent Zimbabwe', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics,* 39 (2001), 51-74.

Chen, Changwei, 'A Diplomatic Tightrope: The Whitlam Government and the Diego Garcia Dilemma', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History ,*42 (2014), 530-550.

Chi-Kwan, Mark, 'Defence of Decolonisation? Britain, the US, and the Hong Kong Question in 1957', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 33 (2005), 51-72.

Cohen, Stewart, 'Imperial Policing against Illegal Immigration: The Royal Navy and Palestine 1945-48', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 2 (1994), 257-93.

Cormac, Rory, 'A Whitehall Showdown? Colonial Office-Joint Intelligence Committee Relations in the mid-1950s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 39 (2011), 249-67.

Colman, Jonathan, 'Britain and the Indo-Pakistani conflict: The Rann of Kutch and Kashmir 1965', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 37 (2009), 465-82.

Cooper, Alastair, 'At the Crossroads: Anglo-Australian Naval Relations: 1945-1971', *Journal of Military History,* 58 (1994), 699-718.

Cox-Alomar, Rafael, 'Britain's Withdrawal from the Eastern Caribbean 1965-67', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 31 (2003), 74-106.

Craggs, Ruth, Harshan Kumarasingham, 'Losing an Empire and Building a Role: The Queen, Geopolitics and the Construction of the Commonwealth Headship at the Lusaka Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 1979', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 43 (2015), 80-98.

Cryle, Denis, 'Cornerstone of the Commonwealth: The Press Union and the Preservation of the Penny Cable Rate 1941-67', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 42 (2014), 153-70.

Crawford, John, 'A political H-bomb: New Zealand and the British Thermonuclear Tests of 1957-58', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 26 (1998), 127-50.

Darwin, John, 'British Decolonisation since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 187-209.

Darwin, John, 'Diplomacy and Decolonisation', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 5-24.

Dean, D.W., 'Final Exit? Britain, Eire, the Commonwealth and the Repeal of the External Relations Act 1945-49', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 20 (1992), 391-418.

Devereux, David, 'Britain, the Commonwealth and the Defence of the Middle East 1948-56', *Journal of Contemporary History,* 24 (1987), 327-45.

Fieldhouse, David, 'Can humpy-dumpty be put together again? Imperial History in the 1980s' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 9-23.

Furedi, Frank, 'Creating a Breathing Space: The Political Management of Colonial Emergencies', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993), 89-106.

Ganesan N. 'Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Some Recent Developments', *Asian Affairs: An American Review,* 25(1998), 21-36.

Groen, Petra, 'Militant Response: The Dutch Use of Military Force and the Decolonisation of the Dutch East Indies 1945-50', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993), 30-44.

Goldstein, Erik, and B.J.C. McKercher, 'Introduction', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 14 (2003), 1-22.

Goldsworthy, David, 'Keeping Change Within Bounds: Aspects of Colonial Policy during the Churchill and Eden governments 1951-57', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 18 (1990), 81-108.

Goldsworthy, David, 'Conservatives and Decolonisation: A Note on the Interpretation by Dan Horowitz', *African Affairs,* 69 (1970), 278-81.

Goodman, Michael, 'With a Little Help from my Friends: The Anglo-American Atomic Intelligence Partnership, 1945-1958', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 18 (2003), 155-83.

Hatchard, John, 'Re-establishing a Multi-Party State: Some Constitutional Lessons from the

Seychelles', *Journal of Modern African Studies,* 31 (1993), 601-12.

Hatzivassilou, Evanthis, 'Blocking Enosis: Britain and the Cyprus Question March-December 1956', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 19 (1991), 247-63.

Henshaw, Peter James, 'The Transfer of Simonstown: Afrikaner Nationalism, South African Strategic Dependence, and British Global Power', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 3 (1992), 419-444.

Hilliker, J. F., 'Distant Ally: Canadian Relations with Australia during the Second World War', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 13 (1984), 46-67.

Holland, R.F., 'The Imperial Factor in British Strategies from Attlee to Macmillan 1945-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 165-86.

Hinds, Allister. 'Sterling and Imperial Policy 1945-51', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 15 (1987), 148-69.

Hopkins, Anthony, 'Viewpoint - Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History', *Past and Present ,*164 (1999), 198-243.

Hughes, Philip, 'Division and Discord: British Policy, Indochina, and the Origins of the Vietnam War 1954-56', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 94-112.

Hyam, Ronald., 'Africa and the Labour Government 1945-51', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16 (2008), 148-72.

Hyam, Ronald. 'The Parting of Ways: Britain and South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth 1951-61', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 26 (1988), 157-175.

Ittman, Karl, 'The Colonial Office and the Population Question in the British Empire 1918-62', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 27 (1999), 55-81.

Jalal, Ayesha, 'India's Partition and the Defence of Pakistan: An Historical Perspective', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 15 (1987), 289-310.

Jauffret, Jean-Charles, 'The Origins of the Algerian War: The Reaction of France and its Army to the Two Emergencies of 8 May 1945 and 1 November 1954', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993), 17-29.

Jones, Matthew, 'Creating Malaysia: Singapore Security, the Borneo Territories, and the Contours of British Policy 1961-63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 85-109.

Kaufman, Scott, 'Operation Oracle: the US, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the Offshore Islands Crisis of 1954-55', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 32 (2004), 106-24.

Kennedy, Dane, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 23 (1997), 345-63.

Kent, John. 'US Reactions to Empire, Colonialism, and Cold War in Black Africa 1949-57', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 33 (2005), 195-220.

Kunz, Diane, 'Somewhat Mixed Up Together: Anglo-American Defence and Financial Policy during the 1960s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 27 (1999), 213-32.

Leah, Christine and Rod Lyon, 'Three Visions of the Bomb: Australian thinking about Nuclear Weapons and Strategy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* 64 (2010), 449-477.

Lee, David, 'Australia, the British Commonwealth, and the US 1950-53', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 20 (2008), 445-69.

Lee, J.M., 'Forward Thinking' and War: The Colonial Office during the 1940s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 6 (1977), 64-79.

W.R. Louis, & R. Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonisation' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 22 (1994), 462-511.

Louis W.R., 'The British Withdrawal from the Gulf 1967-71', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 31 (2003), 83-108.

Louis, W.R., 'Sir Alan Cunningham and the End of British Rule in Palestine', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16 (1988), 128-47.

Lynn, Martin, 'The Nigerian Self-Government Crisis of 1953 and the Colonial Office', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 34 (2006), 245-61.

Madden, A.F., 'Not for Export: The Westminster Model of Government and British Colonial Practice', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979), 10-29.

Maekawa, Ichiro, 'Neocolonialism Reconsidered: A Case Study of East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 43 (2015), 317-41.

MacKenzie, Hector, 'An Old Dominion and the New Commonwealth: Canadian Policy on the Question of India's Membership 1947-49', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 27 (1999), 82-112.

Maguire, J. R., 'The Decolonisation of Belize: Self-Determination v. Territorial Integrity', *Virginia Journal of International Law,* 22 (1981), 849-81.

Mason, Michael. 'The Decisive Volley: The Battle of Ismailia and the Decline of British Influence in Egypt January-July 1952', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 19 (1991), 45-64.

McCourt, David, 'What was Britain's “East of the Suez Role”? Reassessing the Withdrawal',

*Diplomacy and Statecraft,*20 (2009), 453-472.

McDougall, Derek, 'Australia and the British Military Withdrawal from East of Suez', *Australian Journal of International Affairs,* 51 (1997), 183-194.

McEvoy, F. J., 'Canada, Ireland, and the Commonwealth: The Declaration of the Irish Republic 1948-49', *Irish Historical Studies,*24 (1985), 506-527.

McIntyre, David, 'The Admission of Small States to the Commonwealth', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,*24 (1996), 244-277.

McIntyre, David, 'Britain and the Creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 135-158.

McIntyre, David, 'The Unofficial Commonwealth Relations Conferences 1933-59: Precursors of the tri-sector Commonwealth' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 36 (2008), 591-614.

McIntyre, David, 'Canada and the Creation of the Commonwealth Secretariat 1965', *International Journal,* 53 (1998), 753-777.

McKenzie, Francine, 'Renegotiating a Special Relationship: The Commonwealth and Anglo-American Economic Discussions September-December 1945', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 26 (1998), 71-93.

McKenzie, Francine, 'In the National Interest: Dominions' Support for Britain and the Commonwealth after the Second World War', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 34 (2006), 553-76.

Miller, J.D.B., 'The Commonwealth and World Order: The Zimmern vision and After', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979), 159-74.

Moore, Richard, 'British Nuclear Warhead Design, 1958-1966: How much American Help?*', Defence Studies,* 4 (2004), 207-28.

Newston, Scott, 'Britain, the Sterling Area, and European Integration', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 13 (1985), 163-82.

No author, 'A Bibliography of the works of Nicholas Mansergh', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979), 187-190.

Okoth, P.G., 'The Political Economy of Human Rights Crisis in Uganda 1962-1985', *Transafrican Journal of History,* 24 (1994), 142-57.

Pabian, F.V., 'South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Programme: Lessons for US Non-Proliferation Policy', *Nonproliferation Review,* 3 (1995), 1-19.

Pearce, R.D., 'Governors, Nationalists, and Constitutions in Nigeria 1935-51', *Journal of Imperial and*

Commonwealth History, 9 (1981), 289-307.

Pfeiffer, Rolf, 'New Zealand and the Suez crisis of 1956', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993), 126-52.

Rizvi, Gowher, 'Transfer of Power in India: A Restatement of an Alternative Approach', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 127-44.

Ravndal, Ellen, 'Exit Britain: British Withdrawal from the Palestine Mandate in the Early Cold War 1947-1948', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 23 (2010), 416-33.

Robinson, Kenneth, 'Colonialism French Style 1945-55: A Backward Glance', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 24-41.

Robinson, Ronald, 'Imperial Theory and the Question of Imperialism after Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 12 (1984), 42-54.

Robinson, Ronald, 'The Moral Disarmament of the African Empire 1919-47', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979), 86-104.

Sato, Shohei, 'Britain's Decision to Withdraw from the Persian Gulf 1964-68: A Pattern and a Puzzle', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 37(2009), 99-117.

Schenk, Catherine, 'Decolonisation and European Economic Integration: The Free Trade Area Negotiations 1956-58', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 24 (1996), 444-63.

Scigliano, Robert., 'Vietnam: A Country at War', *Asian Survey,* 3 (1963), 48-54.

Singleton, John, 'Vampires to Skyhawks: Military Aircraft and Frigate Purchases by New Zealand 1950-70', *Australian Economic History Review,* 42 (2002), 183-203.

Stockwell, A.J., 'Britain and Brunei 1945-1963: Imperial Retreat and Royal Ascendancy', *Modern Asian Studies,* 38 (2004), 785-819.

Stockwell, A.J., 'Malaysia: The making of a Neo-Colony', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 26 (1998), 138-56.

Stockwell, A.J., 'A Widespread and Long-concocted Plot to Overthrow Government in Malaya'? The Origins of the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 21 (1993), 66-88.

Stone, Glyn, 'Britain and the Angolan Revolt of 1961', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 27 (1999), 109-37.

Subritzky, John, 'Britain, Konfrontasi, and the End of Empire in South-East Asia 1961-65', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 28 (2000), 209-227.

Thayer, Carlyle, 'The Five Power Defence Arrangements: the Quiet Achiever', *Security Challenges Journal,* 3 (2007), 79-96.

Thompson, Roger, 'Conflict of Cooperation? Britain and Australia in the South Pacific 1950-1960', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 23 (1995), 301-24.

Tignor, Robert, 'The Suez Crisis of 1956 and Egypt's Foreign Private Sector', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 20 (1992), 274-297.

Tinker, Hugh, 'The Contraction of Empire in Asia 1945-48: The Military Dimension', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16 (1988), 218-33.

Tomlinson, B.R., 'The Contraction of England: National Decline and Loss of Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 11 (1982), 58-72.

Tosh, John, 'The Economy of Southern Sudan under the British 1898-1955', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 9 (1981), 275-288.

Toye, Richard. 'Phrases make History here: Churchill, Ireland, and the Rhetoric of Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 38 (2010), 549-70.

Waddy, Nicholas, 'The Fork in the Road? British Reactions to the Election of an Apartheid Government in South Africa, May 1948', *Historia,* 55 (2010), 78-89.

Waters, Christopher, 'Australia and the Non-Aligned Movement in Asia, 1954-1955', *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* 12 (2001), 153-174.

Waters, Christopher, 'Anglo-Australian Conflict over the Cold War: HV Evatt as President of the UN General Assembly 1948-49', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 22 (1994), 294-317.

Watts, Carl, 'Britain, the Old Commonwealth, and the Problem of Rhodesian Independence 1964-65', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 36 (2008), 75-99.

Westcott, N.J., 'Closer Union and the Future of East Africa 1939-48: A Case Study in the Official Mind of Imperialism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 10 (1982), 67-88.

Wesseling, H.L., 'The Giant that was a Dwarf, of the Strange History of Dutch Imperialism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 16 (1988), 58-70.

Wigly, Philip, and Norman Hillmer, 'Defining the First British Commonwealth: The Hankey Memoranda on the 1926 Imperial Conference', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 8 (1979), 105-16.

Williams, Gary, 'Keeping a Line Open: Britain and the 1979 Coup in Grenada', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* 39 (2011), 479-508.

Winegard, Timothy, 'Canadian Diplomacy and the 1982 Falklands War', *International History Review,* 35 (2013), 162-83.

Vivekanandan, B., 'The Commonwealth Secretariat', *International Studies,* 9 (1967), 301-31.

Young, Ken, 'The Royal Navy's Polaris Lobby*,' Journal of Strategic Studies,* 25 (2002), 56-86.